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WELCOME SYRIAN FRIENDS!

Hints and tips for T.O.'s newcomers metroNEWS

Toronto metro

Your essential daily news

THURSDAY, DEC. 10, 2015 | High 10°C/Low 5°C Mostly cloudy

PROMISES KEPT:

Trudeau TRACKER

- GENDER PARITY
- TAXATION
- REFUGEES
- CLIMATE
- INDIGENOUS WOMEN

metroNEWS

Deemed 'dangerous and disruptive' by Mayor John Tory, cab drivers brought downtown to a halt with a protest against UberX metroNEWS

THE FORCE IS WITH THESE TREE ORNAMENTS

metroHOME

'Traffic stretch' worst in nation

REPORT

Road delays make common trips take three times longer

It typically takes nearly three times longer to travel a common Toronto route than it would if traffic flowed freely, according to a new study that measures "traffic stretch" to determine just how much worse driving in the city is than it should be.

Traffic stretch is what happens when the 18-minute hop from the Beach to High Park becomes a 45-minute stop-and-go ordeal, says the aptly named report How Bad is the Traffic Where You Live?

The research, done by a data analytics website called The 10 and 3, shows that Toronto has the worst traffic stretch among 14 Canadian cities. That ranking is based on the difference between a trip's normal length and the time it takes when snarled by construction, traffic, weather or a combination.

Co-author Arik Motskin says the differences among the 14 cities in the study is "stark and surprising."

"Forget going to Union Station from Pearson airport in a reasonable amount of time; major backups on the Gardiner and Highway 427 can give this route a stretch multiplier of three times or more," says the report.

180%

Amount city's traffic could increase n a worst case scenario.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Decorations relations: Canadian Tire and Walmart in light fight over clip-ons. **Business**

A panda cub at the Toronto Zoo. THE CANADIAN PRESS

TORONTO ZOO

All eyes on baby pandas

At eight weeks old, the Toronto Zoo's giant panda cubs are quite the sight.

Both baby pandas reached another growth milestone now that their eyes have partially opened, the zoo says. At this stage, they are still sensitive to the light and darkness.

Not only are they beginning to see, but they are being heard more too. The zoo says their once quiet squeaks are developing into louder squawks from within their maternity den, where they will be housed for at least two more months. They share the den with their mother, Er Shun, who is on loan from China. The space is not open to the public as the zoo says it is still a very critical time for the cubs.

The pair currently weighs about 4.4 pounds each and measure roughly half a meter tall from the top of their head to the tip of their tail. The two baby pandas were born pink, hairless and blind about two months ago. They are the first giant pandas born on Canadian soil. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Tip-toeing over grates

SAFETY

New York City sets example, but T.O. won't follow it

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Toronto won't be following in the footsteps of New York City when it comes to subway grates.

The Metropolitan Transportation Authority of New York is replacing some of its subway grates with a "high-heel friendly" option that has smaller gaps, making it easier for the Carries and Samanthas of NYC to walk without catching a stiletto and falling down.

Gothamist reports the new grates are made with slip-resistant surfaces and the openings between the crossbars are only a half inch wide.

Toronto has some heel-friendly grates in Dundas Square, but most of the city's grates have wide holes, large enough to trip a person up.

"Every time I walk past them I have to be careful," said Wen Li, a consultant who works downtown.

Claudia Leiva, a recent Master of Archeology graduate who was downtown dressed for networking in a pair of suede black platform pumps, agreed heel-friendly grates would be a great idea—she's always tip-toeing over the ones Toronto has now.

But the TTC has no plans to change Toronto's grates.

They provide ventilation for the subway system in case of a fire and the opening can't be made smaller without cutting off air, TTC spokesman Brad Ross said.

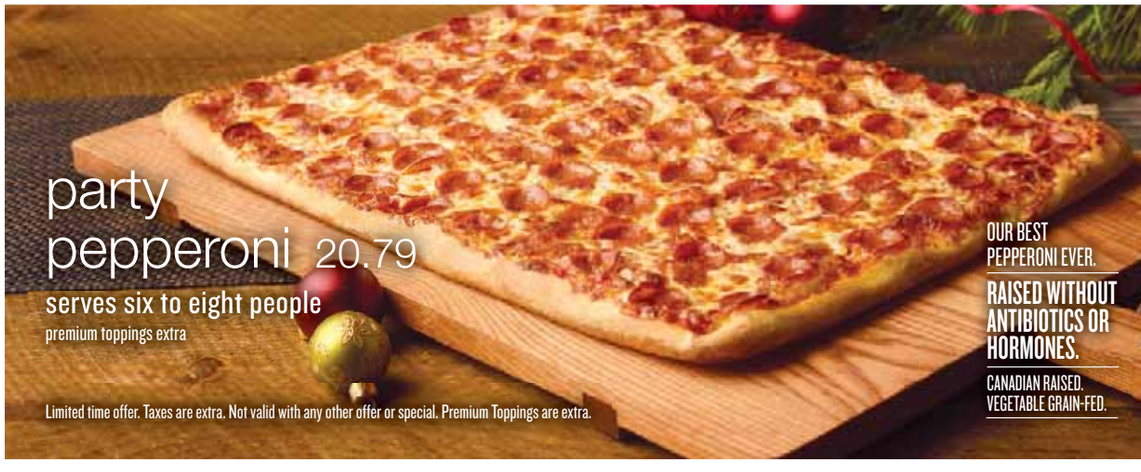
"Smaller openings are more easily blocked by leaves and debris, which also affects the air flow through the grate," he said.

New York's Metropolitan Transit Authority has retrofitted grates, but this is the scene in Toronto. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO; OTHER PHOTOS: JESSICA SMITH CROSS/METRO

FEET ON THE STREET THE PERILS OF WALKING IN HEELS

"Walking around with high heels if there's cracks or holes you're bound to put your heel in it and fall down."
Claudia Leiva

"I have client meetings downtown, and I have to be in my heels."
Wen Li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Arrests made in fraud case

CRIME

Police allege two men began $93M pyramid scheme

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Toronto police have arrested two men accused of defrauding thousands of "investors" out of $93 million (US) through an alleged global pyramid scheme known as "Banners Broker."

Banners Broker began in an office at Church and Shuter streets in 2010, founded by Christopher George Smith, 45, of Toronto, and Rajiv Dixit, 45, of Vancouver, police allege.

The pair offered a pitch to investors: "A new way to double your money."

Purportedly, the investment opportunity was in online advertising — selling banner ads on websites. However, police allege money raised by the company between 2010 and 2012 was not from banner ads, but had been paid by new investors — in the manner of a pyramid scheme.

"There were subtle twists in the language, but I believe the early participants knew, or ought to have known, they were participating in a pyramid scheme," said Det. Sgt. Ian Nichol, of the mass marketing section of the Toronto Police Service.

According to Nichol, the scheme was later "repackaged" so it appeared to be a legitimate advertising company, attracting more victims who were then "duped" into investing.

Those later investors were then "left holding the bag" when the company collapsed, Nichol said.

The remaining funds — about $45 million — were allegedly funnelled to a number of offshore accounts in Belize, St. Lucia, Cyprus and other places.

Banners Broker had a heavy online presence, much of which remains today, including online tutorials about how to invest. Other, more recent videos show angry investors demanding their money back.

Banners Broker's website went offline, but archived versions show its promises to double investors' money. ARCHIVE.ORG

Smith and Dixit are charged with fraud, money laundering and pyramid selling. Despite Nichol's contention that early investors knew they were benefitting from a pyramid scheme, which is illegal, police do not expect to lay further charges.

"It's one thing to believe something, it's another to prove it to a criminal threshold," Nichol said.

ANIMAL RIGHTS

Hunting show stirs outrage

Tensions between animal rights activists and big-game hunters are set to boil over thanks to a trophy hunting conference scheduled for Toronto next month.

Several animal rights groups are planning to protest the African Hunting Events show at a suburban Holiday Inn in mid-January.

Camille Labchuk, a lawyer with Animal Justice, has started an online petition demanding the hotel cancel the event.

She said it's hard to believe such events still exist amid the uproar following the hunting and killing of Cecil the lion in Zimbabwe by an American hunter earlier this year.

"It's shocking to us that just mere months after the global outrage sparked by Cecil the lion's death that the Holiday Inn would agree to book an event that celebrates the trophy hunting of countless animals just like Cecil," she says.

But an event organizer said activists are uneducated about hunting in Africa. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Mandatory Car Insurance Savings
Winter Tire Discount Now Required by Law in Ontario

Starting January 1, 2016 all Ontario car insurance companies must offer a discount to drivers who change their tires seasonally.

" The standard winter tire discount in the insurance industry prior to it being mandated was 5 per cent," said InsuranceHotline.com's own in-house expert Anne Marie Thomas in a discussion with the *Globe and Mail*. "It's worth asking about because if you already put on winter tires, you're getting a discount for something you're already doing."

As a result of the new mandated discount, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO) is encouraging people to shop around for a better rate.

How winter tires make a difference

According to the Rubber Association of Canada, winter tires offer up to 50 per cent or more traction than all-seasons. Generally it's recommended that winter tires be installed when the temperatures dip to 7° Celsius however for insurance purposes they should be on the car from November until April.

The Ministry of Finance offers the following tips for drivers who will be buying, installing and maintaining winter tires this coming winter:

- Look for tires marked with a logo of a peaked mountain with a snowflake
- Install winter tires in sets of four
- Do not mix tires with different tread patterns or size
- Change tires that are worn close to the tread-wear indicators
- Check the tires' air pressure at least once a month

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NE122G615

Toronto tips for newcomers

As 150 Syrian refugees disembark at Pearson Airport this morning, local residents are set to welcome them with open arms. Here's what some of them — and you — had to say to our newest neighbours:

LUKE SIMCOE/METRO PHOTOS: TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE; LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

MAYOR JOHN TORY

"Few things have made me prouder than the city's response to your arrival. I've seen citizens of Toronto step forward to offer you their homes, their support and their compassion. And I know that you'll see this generous spirit reflected across our city."

COUN. NORM KELLY

"The first word you should learn is 'Hello.' And the first gesture, a smile. Visit city hall and learn about the government that serves people rather than oppresses them."

POLICE CHIEF MARK SAUNDERS

"Toronto is a safe city and the police are here to help you and protect you. If at any time you need our help, please call us at 416-808-2222 or call 911 if you are in immediate danger. We will get you the help you need."

ANNETTE WILDE

OF SAVE A FAMILY FROM SYRIA

"Check out the Christmas Market in the Distillery District. It's magical. It's so ideal for someone new to the city during the holiday season."

BRAD ROSS

TTC SPOKESMAN

"Ask questions if ever in doubt about how to get to where you're going, whether a TTC employee or your fellow traveller. We're all here to help."

JAKE TOBIN GARRETT

OF TORONTO PARKS PEOPLE

"On cold winter days, there's nothing better than the warmth of the free flower conservatories in Allan Gardens and Centennial Park."

RYLAN SELBY

"I know you've been through some struggles so welcome to Toronto. I hope you enjoy it. My favourite area to visit is the Harbourfront."

BRIANNA NEWSOME

"Welcome to Toronto — the city is very easy to get used to. The subway lines are amazing. There are lots of free things going on."

SHANEE SILVER

"I'm glad you're here and safe, and hopefully this long journey is finally ending here. It's a welcoming city. There's a lot to do."

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5 THINGS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR COMMUTE BEAUTIFUL

St. Clair West, Coxwell, Ossington, Royal York and Wellesley TTC stations are getting fancy new public art. The stations are being renovated as part of the TTC's Second Exit and Easier Access project. Work is already underway at Coxwell, St. Clair West and Ossington. Construction at Royal York is scheduled to begin in 2016, and at Wellesley in 2017. Here's what's in store:

CHRIS BATEMAN FOR METRO

1 St. Clair West

Partly inspired by Pierre Berton's book The Secret World of Og, which is about fantasy creatures that recycle objects discarded by humans, artists Rhonda Weppler and Trevor Mahovsky designed dozens of 50-cm bronze snails, each one using a different object for a shell. The creatures are a nod to nearby ravines and the station's underground location.

2 Royal York

Royal York station is set to get a wildlife-themed makeover by artist Noel Harding. The principal feature of the installation is a four-metre stainless steel outline of a hare, which will be erected outside the main entrance. He also plans to install 50 cast-iron white rabbit pairs and 10 stainless steel birds.

3 Ossington

Artist Scott Eunson's design plays off the clean, straightforward 1960s design of Ossington station using clusters of coloured acrylic tiles. The layout of the roughly 800 stick-on pieces will form an abstract wayfinding system, Eunson said, directing people through the various corridors and stairwells and "giving the spaces a sense of flow and visual interest."

Wellesley 4

The colourful mosaics selected for Wellesley will bring a "sophisticated beauty" to the ticket hall and parts of the station exterior, said TTC art juror and local representative Paul Raff. Gisele Amantea's wavy bands of tile will be affixed to the curved column at the centre of the station and two exterior wall panels facing Wellesley Street.

Coxwell 5

Artists Jennifer Davis and Jon Sasaki were inspired by funhouse mirrors and Chicago's famous reflective bean sculpture. A rumpled aluminum stage curtain titled Forwards and Backwards will be installed on one of the station walls, inviting kids to watch their reflections twist and distort.

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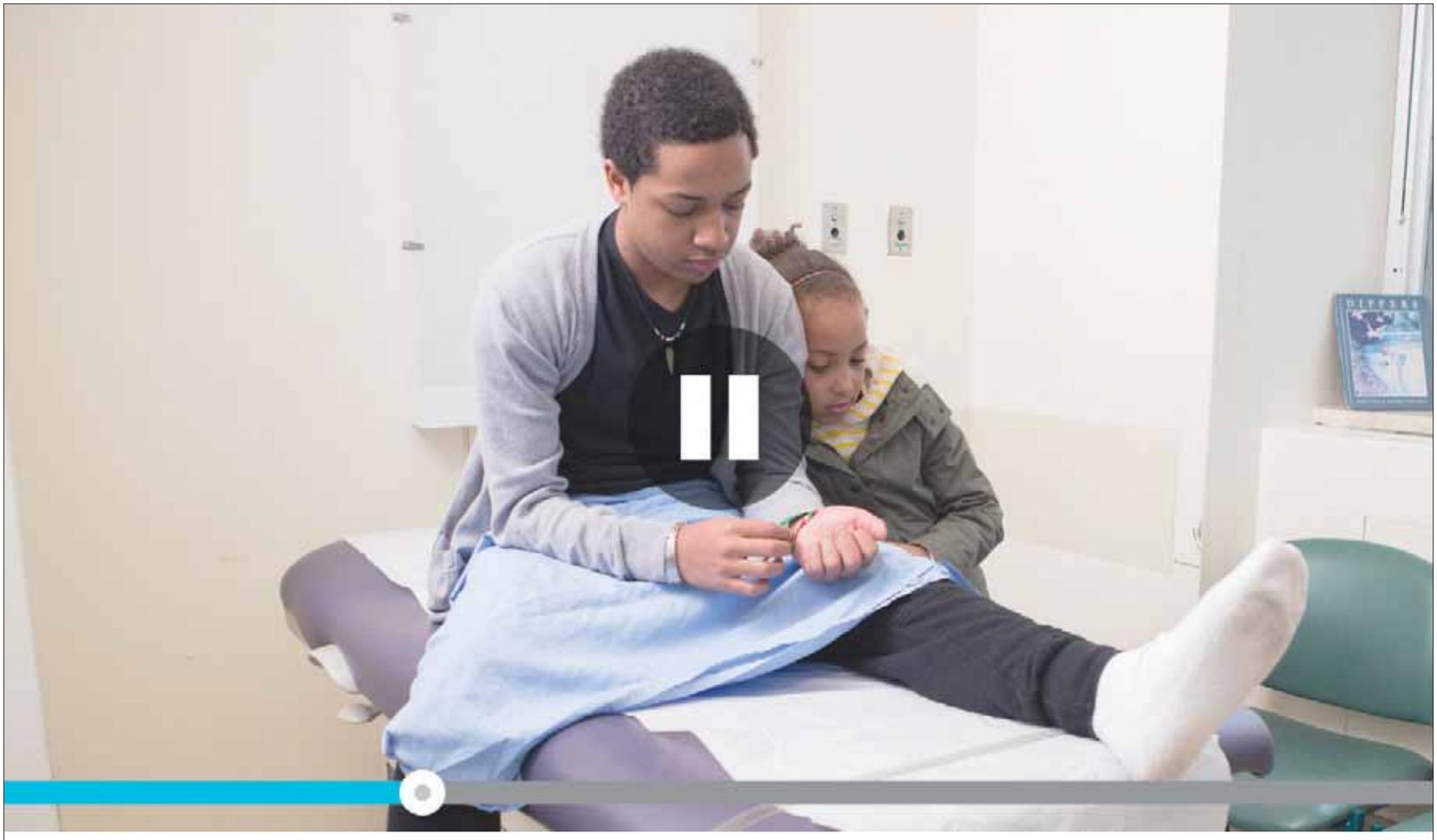

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Jane and Finch's own earns medal for site

ONLINE PLATFORM

Activist finds a way to tell real stories of his community

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

When Paul Nguyen travels to Ottawa this week to receive the Governor General's Meritorious Service Medal, he'll have one regret: Not being able to take the entire Jane-Finch community with him.

"They only allow us one guest," he said. But he'll bring the medal back to the neighbourhood as a reminder that "they can achieve whatever they want in life."

"Many of the kids in my neighbourhood, they're really confined in a few square kilometres and don't have a vision for their life," he said.

Nguyen's online platform, Jane-Finch.com, has been documenting struggles and successes of residents in the neighbourhood mostly known for violence and hardship.

It began in 2004 as a platform for broadcasting rap music, but has since become a kind of media cornerstone for the whole community.

The website's importance was put on display in 2012, when it helped residents connect – and be heard – during the tumultuous "Summer of the Gun."

> **All we want is to promote a lot of positive stuff happening here.**
> Paul Nguyen

Real issues, including poverty, violence and addiction, still persist in the community, Ngyuen said. But he believes positive changes are happening and hopes Jane-Finch.com can continue to dispel misconceptions about the area he's lived in for three decades.

"It's frustrating sometimes, it feels like these problems have been here forever," he said. "All we want is to promote a lot of positive stuff happening here that really seldom gets seen."

Paul Nguyen stands by a mural in Toronto's Jane and Finch neighbourhood. The advocate, radio host and filmmaker is receiving a Governor General's award. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Toronto bin, water taxes to rise in 2016

Toronto's water rates and fees for all garbage bins will increase in 2016, after council approved those budgets Wednesday night.

While water rates will rise by eight per cent, garbage bin fees will increase three per cent for all sizes, consistent with increases in previous years.

On the water bill, the average homeowner using 280 cubic metres per year should expect to pay an additional $72 in 2016. That average homeowner paid $882 in 2015.

$72

The average homeowner will pay an extra $72 on water bills in 2016.

For garbage bins, the three-per-cent increase means the total fees for a single-family home in 2016 will be $244.77 for small bins, $297.14 for medium, $403.55 for large and $468.08 for extra-large.

The budget chief, Coun. Gary Crawford, urged his colleagues to support the budgets put forward by committee, saying the increases go to pay for needed improvements to those services. Though several councillors tried last-minute motions, the first budgets of Mayor John Tory's term were largely passed with few fights and almost no last-minute amendments.

"We're investing in our priorities with this budget," Crawford said. "We're putting money into fixing aging infrastructure, protecting public health and making much-needed capital improvements all across the city."

Coun. Glenn De Baeremaeker narrowly lost a push to further raise fees for residents creating the most waste, those homeowners with extra-large bins. His motion to add an additional $10 for the largest bin — to be put towards solid waste programs — failed by a 15-18 vote.

Coun. Mike Layton backed the approved increase in garbage bin fees, calling them a "cash incentive" for residents to move to a smaller bin and improve their sorting — which would save the city money through better waste diversion.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

This holiday season, Kira is giving Paul two weeks of dog walking (and sitting) services.
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TORONTO
Live green Toronto

DESIGN

U of T to be pedestrian paradise

Chris Bateman
For Metro | Toronto

The University of Toronto's downtown St. George campus is going to become a walker's paradise, complete with cobblestone walkways and shady oak trees.

The university has announced the winner of a design competition to overhaul a large part of the front campus around King's College Circle.

According to plans produced by a consortium of KPMB Architects, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, and Urban Strategies, parked cars and sheets of asphalt will give way to a "necklace" of cobblestone paths and granite surfaces.

Vehicular access to Kings College Circle near Queen's Park will be limited heavily.

The university received more than 600 responses to the design competition, which was launched earlier this year.

The winning plan will be further finessed and work completed in phases over the next few years.

Selected from more than 600 submissions, the winning vision for King's College Circle at the University of Toronto includes **cobblestone pathways and oak trees.** CONTRIBUTED

SOCIAL MEDIA

Oshawa teen arrested for threat

Durham regional police say a 14-year-old student is under arrest after allegedly threatening violence at his Oshawa school on social media.

Police say they were alerted Wednesday morning to a threatening message regarding an Oshawa high school that was posted on Facebook.

The school was placed in a hold and secure for a short period of time while officers worked to locate the person on whose Facebook page the threat was posted.

Police say the teen will be facing criminal charges related to making threats. Investigators say they don't believe he had access to weapons.

Police say threats, even when made online, are taken seriously and, even when deleted, may not be gone from the Internet.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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‘We’re not going anywhere’

TRANSPORTATION

Protesting taxi drivers get meeting with police chief

Cab drivers ended their traffic blockade downtown last night after Mayor John Tory promised them an audience with Police Chief Mark Saunders.

But the drivers promised they’ll be back Friday at noon to resume their demonstration against the city and UberX.

Tory had asked for the taxi blockade to end by 7:30 p.m. after Saunders agreed to a meeting with members of the taxi industry.

Hundreds of cab drivers shut down Queen Street and Bay Street Wednesday afternoon as the drivers’ protest against the city and UberX continued.

“We’re not going anywhere!” shouted the drivers defiantly as they sat down in the middle of the street, causing at least six streetcars to enter a standoff.

In an unscheduled press conference, Tory strongly urged hundreds of taxi drivers to stop blocking roadways before the afternoon rush hour.

“I am asking those involved to stop this,” Tory said.

“There is no excuse for putting the safety of the public at risk.”

But his request went unheeded. Traffic remained snarled at Bay and Queen, as well as at Queen’s Park Circle, through the evening commute.

The plans called for drivers to refuse fares until 7 p.m.

Tory said the city continues to pursue new regulations for UberX, expected sometime this winter, as well as enforcement, which has waned in recent months.

Tory called the mass cabbie protest “dangerous and disruptive” and said it risked blocking emergency vehicles: “The point has been made,” he said.

As council resumed Wednesday after Tory’s comments, protesters filled the public gallery of the chamber. Council’s agenda, the last of 2015, had no items related to taxis or Uber.

Dozens of taxi cabs were parked in silent protest in front of city hall.

“We do everything the city asks from us, and what do they do? They’ve shafted us,” said taxi driver Karanvir Singh.

Sajid Mughal, president of the TaxiWorkers Association, said the drivers are just frustrated.

“Our list is very short and very clear: that we want fairness. We want the enforcement of the bylaws that (the) city passed on Sept. 30,” he said.

Uber Canada spokesperson Susie Heath said she didn’t have any numbers to share on whether the protest helped Uber’s business.

“Torontonians deserve choice and we believe there is room for all of us to serve our city,” Heath said. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

The protest against Uber carried on into the night, as frustrated drivers blocked roads and voiced their concerns with the ride-sharing service in front of city hall. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

> **There is no excuse for putting the safety of the public at risk.**
> Mayor John Tory

BECK RESPONDS

Jessica Smith Cross
Metro | Toronto

Beck Taxi issued a statement Wednesday afternoon calling on their drivers to “stand down.”

“Our drivers are independent. We understand their frustration, but plead that they end their protest now,” said Beck operations manager Kristine Hubbard.

“We certainly understand their frustration and believe it is boiling over today as the result of a lack of leadership on this file from our civic leaders,” Hubbard said.

“Bylaws aren’t being enforced. The independent drivers who work with us have been playing by the rules and they don’t see any effort being made by the city to deal with the illegal competition that is hurting their livelihood so much.”

In the wake of the protests, Beck Taxi appears to have hired Navigator, the public relations firm previously linked to former CBC host Jian Ghomeshi.

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The city plans to add **41 kilometres** of on-street cycling network routes in 2016. COLIN MCCONNELL/TORONTO STAR

Lake Shore bike lane in the works

COMMUTING

Part of city's 10-year cycling network plan

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

The city is embarking on a plan to fill in gaps in its cycling network, starting with a stretch of Lake Shore Boulevard in Etobicoke.

A 1.4-kilometre cycle track is being planned between Norris Crescent and First Street. The new trail will provide a safe connection for cyclists pedalling along the western waterfront.

"There is currently no continuity in that section," said Jacquelyn Hayward Gulati, the city's manager of cycling infrastructure. "A walker would be on a sidewalk of Lake Shore and a cyclist would be in the mix with traffic because there's no bike lane. We want to separate cyclists and motorists in this area," Gulati said.

The project would create a separated bi-directional cycle track on the south side of Lakeshore, with barriers such as a low concrete wall, curbs or painted buffer zones clearly separating the track from vehicular lanes.

Gulati estimated 80 street parking spots will be removed as part of the project. Construction is expected to start in the spring. The Lakeshore West path is part of the city's broader, 10-year cycling network plan.

The 2016 implementation program will look at the creation of 41 kilometres of on-street cycling network routes, Gulati said.

Studies for pilot projects will consider the Bloor-Dupont corridor, between Keele and Sherbourne streets. There's also Yonge Street between Finch and Sheppard avenues, as well as Yonge Street between Bloor and Front streets.

IN BRIEF

Man charged in murder

Calgary police have charged an Ontario man in his daughter's death Dec. 19, 2014. Olive Rebekah Oluwafemi, 4, was found not breathing, and pronounced dead. Oluwatosin Oluwafemi was arrested Tuesday and flown to Calgary to face a second-degree murder charge. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Officials fight raccoon rabies

Wildlife officials are vaccinating raccoons against rabies in the Hamilton area after three new cases of raccoon rabies.

They will drop 32,000 baits by helicopter in an area south and southwest of Hamilton to control the outbreak. THE CANADIAN PRESS

$801,375

Total fines issued for blocking bike lanes this year. Toronto police have issued 6,850 infractions to date in 2015, an average of 604 a month between January and November. However, the city has collected just $329,377 of that $801,375. A spokesperson for the City of Toronto said it can take up to two years to resolve a parking ticket dispute.

CHRIS BATEMAN / FOR METRO

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New Real Estate Bonanza

Right now while you are reading this, hedge funds are buying U.S. property in mass. Foreign nationals are loading up on houses as fast as they can. Some savvy individuals are snapping up housing in the U.S. like never before.

In October, *Reuters* reported private investment firm Starwood Capital Group got in the game. They purchased 23,262 mid-rise and garden-style apartments for a whopping $5.37 billion. Other hedge funds are buying entire subdivisions under construction.

The Chinese are the number one overseas investors of U.S. real estate. Often they will buy 10 condos at once, sight unseen.

Does all this investment activity show the U.S. headed for another property bubble? The answer is no.

Demographics are driving demand for rental property to heights unseen in American history. *Bloomberg Business* says rents are only going higher.

The Millennials saddled with student debt, are choosing to rent. Others want to live in cities and avoid long commutes home ownership often demands.

One of the fastest growing demographic segments in the U.S. is those over age 65. Their downsizing activity is flooding the market with discounted property.

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FANBOY FINDS

With The Force Awakens hitting theatres on Dec. 18, Metro went hunting for the biggest Star Wars collectors and fans this side of Tatooine. Here are their stories, and their toys.

Colin McNeil
Metro | Toronto

THE FORCE AWAKENS

Metro delves into the people, hype and love that make up Star Wars fandom.

Currently residing on the outer rim of the GTA, Shaun Hume is a Star Wars fan who obviously found the droids he was looking for, plus a few more.

His massive merchandise collection boasts seven ornate replica lightsabers, actor-signed images of Darth Vader, Boba Fett, Lando Calrissian and Darth Maul, a metre-long Millennium Falcon, hundreds of figurines, and an original Episode VI poster that reads "Revenge" of the Jedi — the initial title of the film before it was changed to Return of the Jedi.

Hume isn't afraid to wear his fandom on his sleeve — sometimes literally — either. Many of his pieces are lovingly displayed in cases, some packed away in boxes, like his limited edition George Lucas figure wearing a Stormtrooper outfit — still in the box, of course.

"I think most people should live their life through fantasy," he said.

It all started at a friend's fifth birthday party, when Hume watched him unwrap half a dozen figures from Return of the Jedi, and fell in love with collecting. Since then, he hasn't looked back, amassing a garrison of action figures and plastic weapons that would put the Empire to shame.

As for the cold, hard value of it all, Hume estimates his collection is worth between $10,000 and $15,000. He calls it priceless.

His wife calls it a down payment on a home.

With a full time job and a growing family, the 35-year-old has no shortage of things to keep him occupied on planet Earth, but the diehard fan keeps coming back to a galaxy far, far away. For him, the appeal is obvious: "Nobody ever wants to grow up."

Follow Colin McNeil on Twitter @mcneilcolin

Shaun Hume poses in front of just some of the hundreds of figures and play sets that make up his massive Star Wars memorabilia collection. LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO

Clockwise, left: Hume used this huge **Darth Vader helmet** as a favour box at his wedding; The collector embraces the dark side, wielding a finely-crafted replica of Kylo Ren's lightsaber, the latest bad guy in the Star Wars franchise; Action figures, some old, some new, dominate the fan's carefully displayed collection of Star Wars merchandise. LANCE MCMILLAN/FOR METRO

... IT WILL DOMINATE YOUR DESTINY

Anthony Gregory grew up watching the Star Wars films, playing with the action figures and dreaming about a galaxy far, far away.

But while most fans are content to watch the movies, Gregory is determined to actually work on one.

The job he's gunning for? Visual effects supervisor. The film? Episode IX, expected to be released in 2019.

If that sounds a little far fetched, the 26-year-old already has his start in the effects business, currently working for Legend 3D in Toronto.

But that isn't the end of his story.

A few months ago, on a trip home to Dubai, he found a small music box – a relic from his childhood, something his parents said he chewed on as a baby.

"You wind up the dial on the middle," said Gregory, "and it plays a tune. And the tune was familiar." It was one he'd heard a thousand times as a baby, that danced in his subconscious for decades, but one his adult ears had never heard until that moment.

It was the theme from Star Wars. COLIN MCNEIL/METRO

Dunbar and R2-Beer2. CONTRIBUTED

Collect or collect not, there is no try

Ed Dunbar may just have a job as an droid repairman if the Empire ever comes to town. The Pickering resident is nearly finished constructing his own R2-D2 replica, complete with a remote controlled motor and swivel head. Oh, and did we mention it's a beer cooler too?

He's hoping to have it ready for Dec. 18, when the new Star Wars movie hits theatres.

Dunbar is making his astromech droid on the cheap, running him a trim $350 so far. Professionally-made R2 replicas can sell for as much as $9,000 USD.

Lee's 75 lb resin Yoda statue. CONTRIBUTED

After decades of devotion to Star Wars, Justin Lee has amassed a merchandise collection that includes action figures, Lego sets, comics, masks and helmets, high quality lightsaber replicas, and a life-size, 75 lb Yoda statue made of resin.

The GTA resident has been hooked on a galaxy far, far away since age five, when he first saw The Empire Strikes Back. He estimates his collection is worth around $5,000. Why does he collect?

"For me it's the whole fantasy aspect of it," said Lee. "It brings me back to my childhood. To happy times in my life when things were simple."

Promised tax cuts on way

POLITICS

Changes will cost federal treasury over $1bn per year

Michael Woods
Metro | Ottawa

The Liberal government is forging ahead with its plan to raise taxes on the rich and cut taxes for middle-income earners — despite the fiscal impact on federal coffers.

The Liberal campaign platform said the tax changes would be revenue neutral, but the government admitted this week that they won't be; they will cost the federal treasury $1.2 billion annually.

Asked about the $1.2 billion gap on Wednesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters there were different analyses during the campaign of how much the measures were going to cost and bring in.

The Liberals promised to raise taxes from 29 per cent to 33 per cent on incomes more than $200,000, and lower the tax rate from 22 per cent to 20.5 per cent on incomes between $44,000 and $89,000.

"That is what we are doing, and that is what we're committed to doing," Trudeau said. "It's not just good for middle-class Canadians to get more money in their pockets every paycheque, it's also good for fighting against the income inequality that continues to be a problem for growth in Canada."

Finance Minister Bill Morneau has said the Liberals are facing a slower economy and a worse-than-expected fiscal environment handed over from the former Conservative government.

"We have inherited a situation that is more challenging than what was foreseen in the budget," he said on Monday.

A ways and means motion detailing the changes passed in the House of Commons 230-95 on Wednesday.

Trudeau also appears to be softening his plan, outlined during the campaign, to run $10 billion modest deficits in the first three years of his government.

"We put forward $10 billion as a goal we were looking to keep for modest deficits. But at the same time we committed, on an ongoing basis, to keep you apprised if the situation worsened," he said.

"Because the one thing we have committed to Canadians is to reverse the low growth that Canadians have experienced over the past 10 years. And that is going to take investment."

Trudeau TRACKER

- GENDER PARITY
- TAXATION
- REFUGEES
- CLIMATE
- INDIGENOUS WOMEN

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks to media in Ottawa on Wednesday. His vow to Canadians reduces the tax rate of middle-income earners by 1.5 per cent. ADRIAN WYLD/THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Liberals mum on Afghan security funding renewal

Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan was non-committal Wednesday about renewing Canada's $300-million support for Afghan security forces, despite a deadly attack by the Taliban at Kandahar Airfield that left as many as 37 people dead.

NATO foreign ministers last week approved an aid request to the international community as a whole, but Sajjan said it will be treated the same way as other urgent security matters. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Assisted dying law to take effect Thursday

Controversial Quebec legislation on assisted dying will become law on Thursday, says the province's health minister.

Gaetan Barrette made the announcement Wednesday after Quebec's top tribunal gave the province permission to appeal a lower-court decision that granted an injunction aimed at blocking adoption of the law. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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2032 Weston Rd.
1267 St. Clair Ave. W.
45 Fourwinds Dr.

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2129 Danforth Ave
2895 Danforth Ave.
747 Don Mills Rd., Unit 22B
1004 Pape Ave.
1094 Victoria Park Ave.

Etobicoke
2456 Lakeshore Blvd. W.
30A Rexdale Blvd.
1062 Albion Rd, Unit A
1379 Lawrence Ave. W.
4920 Dundas St. W.

Scarborough
1911 Kennedy Rd.
2667 Eglinton Ave. E, Unit 1
2887 Lawrence Ave. E.
4352 Kingston Rd, Unit 7B
1515 Birchmount Rd.

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Westwood Mall
High Point Mall
Mississauga Market Place
2550 Hurontario St
7070 Saint Barbara Blvd, Unit 22
20 Dundas St. E., Unit 1

Brampton
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Kennedy Square Mall
252 Queen St. E.
499 Ray Lawson Blvd.
379 Main St. N.

Syrian refugees are here

Opportunity to succeed

Haidah Amirzadeh was seven months pregnant and couldn't speak English when she arrived as a refugee in Saskatoon in 1989. Zahra Darzi fled Iran with her two daughters after her husband was executed. She claimed refugee status once she arrived in Regina in 1991.

Amirzadeh is now a lawyer specializing in immigration and refugee law who teaches at the University of Saskatchewan. Darzi is an engineer working at Saskatchewan's telephone utility.

Both say they came to Canada looking for an opportunity to succeed and both seized it. As Canada prepares to bring in thousands of Syrian refugees, the women say they want to remind people that, while many will come with little, it won't take long for them to get on their feet.

"I think, especially when somebody has been in such a difficult situation for so long, when they arrive to an opportunity, they really grab onto it," says Amirzadeh. "Nobody really wants to be a burden."

Amirzadeh left Iran and spent 18 months as a refugee in Turkey before settling in Canada. She recalls waiting to be selected, interviewed and picked. There was a lot of anxiety about being rejected.

Once in Canada, she learned English and put herself through law school.

"There are a lot of people who come with nothing, with no English, with no support, and then within a few years they become so successful, it's amazing."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IMMIGRATION

'It will be a great day,' Trudeau says

About 300 Syrians are expected to arrive in Canada by Saturday as the long-awaited, first flights under the Liberal plan to resettle thousands of refugees from the war-torn region finally touch down.

The first aircraft is scheduled to land Thursday evening in Toronto, with a second flight arriving Saturday in Montreal, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the House of Commons during question period.

"Resettling refugees demonstrates our commitment to Canadians and to the world that Canada understands that we can and must do more," he said.

"It will be a great day."

While just over 400 refugees have arrived since the new government was sworn in on Nov. 4, Thursday marks the start of a program that's been weeks in the making, as officials in Canada and overseas have scrambled to help the Liberals meet a campaign promise to resettle 25,000 people.

Initially, the promise was to bring all of them in by year's end, but the government was forced to spread the commitment over a longer time period because of the logistics.

Six-year-old Ahmad Mazan Khabbaz, a refugee from Syria, is greeted by family friend Rakan Almasri, himself a recent arrival to Canada from Syria, as the youngest member of his family arrives with his parents and sisters at Pearson Airport on Wednesday. **While just over 400 refugees have arrived since the new government was sworn in, Thursday marks the start of a government program that's been weeks in the making.** CHRIS YOUNG/THE CANADIAN PRESS

"Resettling refugees demonstrates ... that Canada understands that we can and must do more. PM Justin Trudeau

The first group of refugees will fly to Canada on military planes, but the government says the rest of the flights scheduled for December are likely to be privately chartered aircraft.

The first 300 arrivals are among 10,000 privately sponsored refugees the government is seeking to welcome by Dec. 31.

Those with sponsors in the Toronto or Montreal areas will be told where and when to meet their new hosts, while those destined for other communities across Canada will stay overnight in their arrival cities before moving on the next day.

By the end of February, the government is itself hoping to resettle 15,000 refugees, to be initially spread among 36 different cities where agencies have agreements for resettlement services.

Roadblocks to getting the program off the ground have included getting the UN to find enough cases to refer to Canada for possible resettlement, technical hiccups regarding biometric screening equipment and diplomatic wrangling with governments in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey over exit visas.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

EMERGENCY SERVICES

Ornge calls off chopper sale

Ontario's air ambulance agency has abandoned a proposed sell-off of its costly AW139 helicopters after the market for used choppers collapsed with the drop in oil prices.

The decision follows a review that began back in 2013 as officials at ORNGE looked at alternatives to the AgustaWestland helicopters, which guzzled fuel and were costly to maintain.

But ORNGE announced Wednesday that it was keeping its fleet of 10 AW139 helicopters after all.

The selloff had to be abandoned after the market for used helicopters collapsed with the drop in oil prices. ORNGE sold two AW139s in 2013 for $10 million (US) each. Today, they would be worth just over $6 million, making the replacement scheme unworkable, said Dr. Andrew McCallum, president and CEO of ORNGE.

ORNGE sold two AW139s in 2013 for $10 million (US) each.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE FILE

"It had to be cash neutral. I couldn't say to the government or the taxpayer that we would spend more in helicopters," McCallum said in an interview.

The twin-engine helicopters are often used to support offshore oil and gas operations and the drop in the value of the used aircraft can be attributed to the sagging fortunes of the energy sector, he said.

ORNGE had eyed several new helicopters as possible replacements and originally hoped to finance their purchase out of the proceeds from selling the AW139 helicopters. But unable to get the price it needed on the sale of the existing aircraft, the numbers didn't work.

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Firearms by the numbers

UNITED STATES

Seven key facts about guns in America

Another U.S. mass shooting committed with powerful but legal guns. Another refusal by Congress to pass any new gun laws.

Americans' fixation with firearms is an easy target for world condemnation. Some of it, though, is based on myths, outdated information and flawed assumptions about the actual state of affairs. Here are a few surprising statistics.

This photo shows weapons carried by suspects at the scene of a shootout in San Bernardino, Calif. HANDOUT/SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

1. **Gun crime is way down.** High-profile mass shootings make America seem like a place where gun crime is spiralling out of control. In fact, gun crime is much less common there now than it was in the 1990s. Since 1993, the gun homicide rate has been cut in half, from seven per 100,000 people to 3.6 per 100,000, and the rate of non-deadly gun crime has dropped even more steeply.

2. **Gun ownership is at an all-time low.** Fewer U.S. households possessed guns last year than at any time in the last 40 years: 32 per cent, according to the General Social Survey. It appears that people who already owned a gun have been stocking up on more.

3. **There's strong support for gun restrictions.** Many Americans are highly supportive of specific gun-control proposals. In a Pew poll this summer, large majorities favoured mandatory background checks for people buying guns at gun shows (85 per cent), laws to prevent people with mental illnesses from buying guns (79 per cent), and a federal database to track gun sales (70 per cent).

4. **Some politicians are taking action.** When Congress refuses to do anything about guns even in the wake of mass shootings, it is easy to believe the entire American political system is doing nothing. That's not true: After the 2012 attack on a Colorado movie theatre, the state banned high-capacity magazines. Within two years of the 2012 Sandy Hook school shooting, five states had expanded background checks.

5. **America is still off the charts.** The U.S. continues to have a far higher gun homicide rate than any other wealthy industrialized country. According to one study, the U.S. gun homicide rate was 20 times higher in 2003 than the combined rate of 22 other major nations. The U.S. was responsible for a remarkable 80 per cent of all gun deaths in all of the 23 countries combined.

6. **The biggest gun problem is suicide.** Suicides get far less attention than homicides, but they account for about 60 per cent of U.S. gun deaths — and rising.

7. **African-Americans are the primary victims.** African-Americans, and especially African-American men, are far more likely to be the victims of gun crime than anyone else. In 2010, for example, blacks were seven times more likely than whites to be killed in a gun homicide.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

SAN BERNARDINO

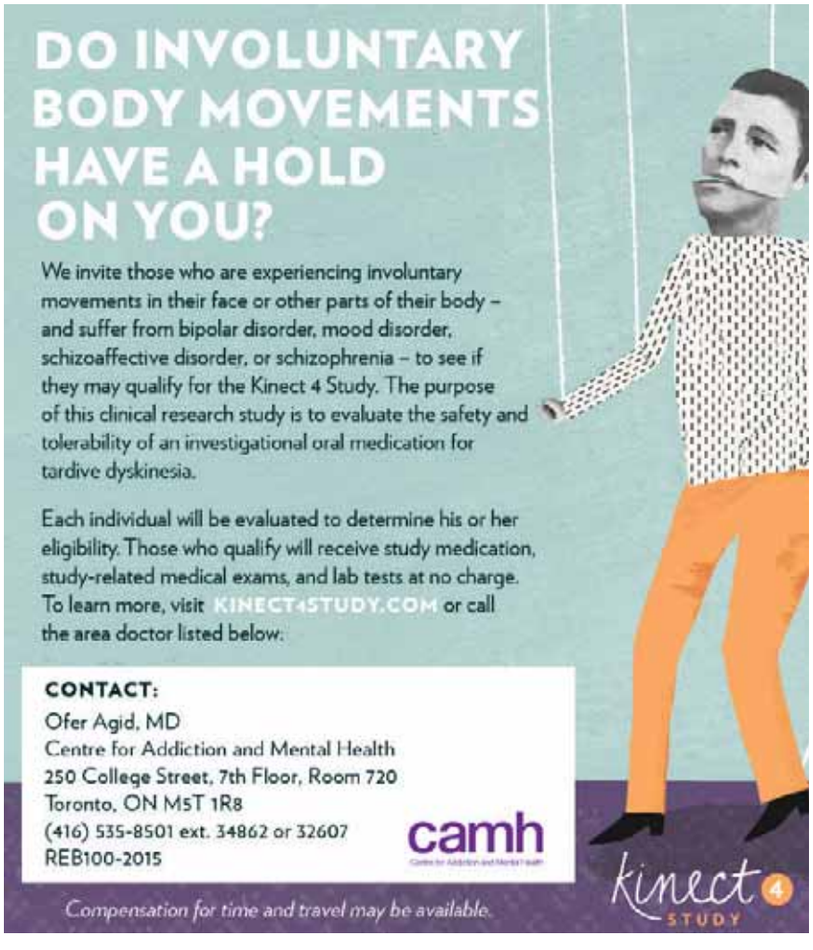
Police, FBI still in dark

By the time the married couple who carried out the deadly San Bernardino, Calif., mass shooting came to the attention of police, it was far too late.

The FBI's acknowledgement that the shooters had been radicalized Muslims for "quite some time" points to the difficulty in discovering potential terrorists who keep a very low profile and shows the deadly consequences that can occur when identification comes too late.

"What this situation shows is (identification) is not a foolproof system. A hundred per cent prevention is not achievable." said David Schanzer, a Duke University public policy professor who runs a centre that studies terrorism. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

"It appears these people were very good at hiding their intentions."
Prof. David Schanzer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Islamophobia rising in France

RACISM

Expert warns of detentions and abuse

France's state of emergency has allowed French police to conduct warrantless searches and detain people without charge — extraordinary powers that have been used to target the Muslim community, religious leaders say.

Yasser Louati is a spokesman for the Collective against Islamophobia in France. He spoke with Torstar News Service from Paris. The interview has been translated from French and edited for length and clarity.

Question: Your organization claims the state of emergency has unfairly targeted Muslims. What evidence do you have?

Answer: The raids have disproportionately targeted people of Islamic faith with overt brutality. We've collected evidence of 50 cases of abuse — and these are just the ones we know about — where police hurled racist abuse at families, women were assaulted and one even miscarried. When raids are conducted on erroneous intelligence — 90 per cent of the raids have found nothing — why humiliate people?

Q: Has there been more racism since the attacks?

A: The hate began the night of the attacks. Even before the attacks were finished, we already had death threats against Muslims and calls for revenge. Veiled women have been assaulted in front of their children — verbally, with fists and even with a box cutter.

Q: This attitude, do you see it as reflecting a bigger problem of Islamophobia, not only in France but across the western world?

A: We saw what Donald Trump said this week about banning Muslim immigration to the U.S. All I have to say is, will he ban the rich Saudis, too? I don't think so. It's just demagoguery. Donald Trump doesn't have policy, he only has punch lines.

Regarding the growing Islamophobia in the West, it's real but it's not due to the presence of Muslims. We've fabricated a Muslim problem in our society. We refuse to see Muslims as full-fledged citizens. We see them as Muslim, therefore an other, a foreigner. Muslims have been citizens of France for four generations and we continue to treat them as second-class.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

> **We've fabricated a Muslim problem in our society.**
> Yasser Louati

Yasser Louati, a spokesman for the Collective against Islamophobia in France, says what's happening in France is part of a growing racism in the West. COLLECTIF CONTRE L'ISLAMOPHOBIE

PARIS ATTACKS

Text reveals terrorist

It took a text from Syria to a mother in France to reveal the identity of the third killer at the Bataclan concert venue in Paris: Your son died as a martyr Nov. 13.

For four weeks, police had failed to identify the third gunman who stormed the venue along with two French Islamic extremists, killing nearly three-quarters of the total 130 people who died in the Paris attacks.

Then, about 10 days ago, Foued Mohamed-Aggad's mother in Strasbourg received a text message in English announcing her son's death "as a martyr"— a typical way the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant notifies families of casualties. She gave French police a DNA sample which showed one of her sons was killed inside the Bataclan.

The news announced Wednesday further confirms that the deadly Paris attacks were carried out largely, if not entirely, by Europeans trained by ISIL extremists. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

UPDATE: MIGRANT CRISIS **Smuggling boat sinks in Aegean, 12 drown, 12 missing; Greece clears out protesting migrants in the north.**

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FOOD DELIVERY

UberEats expands Toronto service

Uber is quadrupling the operating hours of its UberEats delivery service in Toronto and rolling out a wider menu selection from 100 restaurants.

Customers will still be able to tap into Uber's existing short list of menu items — a service it will now call "Instant Delivery" — which delivers food items in under 10 minutes.

Food off the longer menu will take a bit more time to arrive, as it will be prepared on the spot.

Generally food will show up in less than 45 minutes, said Bowie Cheung, general manager of UberEats in Toronto.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

An Uber app user at the TD Centre on Wellington Street in Toronto. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Dollarama reveals prices creeping up

RETAIL

Discount chain says $1.25 is the new $1 — with cap rising to $4

Dollarama confirmed Wednesday what a lot of its customers already know: that the majority of items in the stores are priced above $1.25.

So the Montreal-based discount retailer — where everything originally sold for a loonie or even less when it was founded more than 20 years ago — said it will start to use $1.25 rather than a dollar as its new reference point when reporting sales and financial results.

And while its current maximum price point is $3, Dollarama will also introduce even higher-priced items of $3.50 and $4 starting in the second half of next year, chief executive Larry Rossy told analysts on a conference call.

He said many products at its 1,005 stores across Canada are still priced at a buck, but the $1.25 metric is "a better representation of our price point range."

Montreal-based Dollarama says its higher-priced items are intended to help it adjust to the impact of the weakening Canadian dollar. THE CANADIAN PRESS FILE

> **History has a funny way of repeating itself.**
> Ken Wong

The company said the higher-priced items are intended to help it adjust to the impact of the weakening Canadian dollar.

Ken Wong, marketing professor at the Smith School of Business at Queen's University, said it reminds him of how the five-and-dime stores in the 1950s eventually had to drop that moniker as costs crept up, and then they were just swallowed up by Kresge's and Woolco, then K-Mart and Walmart.

"History has a funny way of repeating itself. No matter what business you're in, your prices can only be as low as your costs," said Wong.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

CHRISTMAS LIGHTS DESIGN

Canadian Tire suing Walmart

Canadian Tire is accusing Walmart of ripping off the design of its made-in-Canada clip-on Christmas lights and is demanding that the mega-retailer cease and desist.

A Federal Court claim filed by Canadian Tire alleges that Walmart worked with two Taiwanese companies to copy the construction and packaging of its Noma Quick-Clip lights.

It wants Walmart to stop selling the "unique" product due to copyright infringement, and is seeking $500,000 in punitive damages.

Walmart has yet to file a statement of defence.

Earlier this week, Canadian Tire issued an unrelated safety warning to customers who purchased Christmas lights from its Holiday Collection line. It says some of the products may pose a fire and shock hazard.

Canadian Tire is recalling 12 products made by Taizhou Hongpeng Colour Lanterns that were sold between Aug. 1, 2015, and Nov. 30, 2015, Canadian Tire said.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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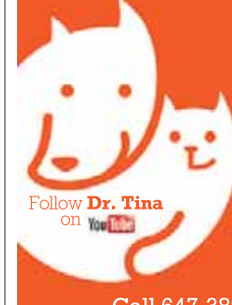

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Your essential daily news
Thursday, December 10, 2015

CHANTAL HÉBERT: ON HARPER'S SUCCESSOR

A majority of Conservatives will be looking for more than just a change in tone when they pick the next leader.

The exact number of Conservative supporters who held their nose to stick with Stephen Harper last October and/or who would rather have had a new leader to vote for will never be known, but based on a poll published earlier this week it was probably significant.

Designed to provide an early glimpse at the dynamics of Harper's succession, the Abacus poll suggests a majority of Conservatives will be looking for more than just a change in tone when they pick the next leader.

Over the course of the past decade, the Reform/Alliance branch of the party has dominated the Harper government. But at this early juncture, none of its leading members inspire more than tepid support among Conservative voters.

Under prominent right-of-centre champions such as Jason Kenney — Harper's go-to minister — or Saskatchewan premier Brad Wall, the party would risk being pushed back to it strongholds of Western Canada.

East of Manitoba, the dream candidate of a plurality of Conservative voters hails from the progressive-conservative side of the family, as does the runner-up.

Of the nine possible contenders put forward by Abacus, only Peter MacKay and Jean Charest, two former federal Tory leaders, enjoy double-digit support in every region of the country.

But Charest has made it clear that he is not contemplating a return to federal politics and his diehard fans seem to have accepted that his no is final.

Based on the Abacus poll, staying on the sidelines is a good call. Only in his home-province would Charest be competitive with MacKay. In Ontario and Atlantic Canada, his former caucus colleague would beat him hands down.

By comparison, Wall barely registers outside of the Prairies. Ditto for Jason Kenney.

That is not to say that Harper's succession is MacKay's for the asking or even that he wants the leadership. But if he did throw his hat in the ring, he would be the prohibitive front-runner, especially in a field that will probably not even feature some of the names that tested best in the Abacus poll.

Wall will be seeking another provincial mandate next year. He has consistently maintained that he has no interest in the federal job. Some believe that could change after the provincial election. But it is a rare premier who enters in a federal leadership campaign without a reasonable certainty of victory, and no such assurance would be on offer to Wall in the case of the Conservative Party.

Kenney has more solid support within the party than the poll indicates. But it is clear his high ministerial profile and a reputation for efficiency have not translated into popularity. Some of his Kenney's closest allies believe that the former minister could win the party, but doubt he could win the country. They note that there is a reason there has never been an openly socially conservative leader at the helm of a major federal party.

It will be weeks and possibly months before the actual lay of the post-Harper land takes shape.

Ontario MP Lisa Raitt ranks best among the other former Harper team members whose names were put to the test. In the months to come, her critic role in the Commons will pit her against Finance Minister Bill Morneau; the pair is already emerging as the duo to watch in question period. But Raitt has yet to demonstrate the same proficiency in French, and no leader who was not fluently bilingual has met with electoral success federally since Lester B. Pearson resigned in the sixties.

By all indications, the Conservatives are not going to rush to a leadership vote. Based on the Conservative performance in question period this week, the interim team Rona Ambrose leads is well up to the job of keeping a rookie Liberal government on its toes in the House.

It will be weeks and possibly months before the actual lay of the post-Harper land takes shape. And although recent experience shows that running to a distant also-ran finish ends up being little more than a vanity pursuit, some of the contenders will only join the race to raise their profiles.

The greater the number of contenders, the higher the odds will be that one of this week's dark horses ends up the winner. Joe Clark and Stéphane Dion were both unlikely beneficiaries of a crowded leadership field.

Chantal Hébert is a national affairs writer. Her column appears in Metro every Thursday.

THE MICROTREND: Self-tanner sales pale

The decades-long trend of both women and men looking suspiciously sun-kissed in Siberian climates seems to finally be on the wane. A study by British market-research firm Mintel has found sales of self-tanning lotion are sinking like the sun on a December afternoon; a shift that is actually kind of retro. While in past centuries parasol-toting ladies prized their milky complexions — it indicated that you hadn't been out in the fields like some kind of peasant — Coco Chanel is credited with popularizing the lightly toasted look in the 1920s. It became the beauty ideal from then on. Interestingly, Chanel's rosy glow was also meant to broadcast that she lived a life of leisure on the French Riviera and didn't need to work, but by that time the workplace was more likely to be a typing pool than a potato farm. SOURCE: THE SCOTSMAN

ROSEMARY WESTWOOD

metroview

Don't be PC. Say it: Donald Trump supporters are racist.

Donald J. Trump is right about one thing. We're far too politically correct.

So politically correct, in fact, that we can't even admit his followers are racist.

We're happy to heap scorn on the man himself. See how much of the world united to denounce his call to ban Muslims from entering the U.S. Witness Vancouver and Toronto seek to rebrand his real estate properties, lest a bigot's name be found in their skyline. Watch the Daily Show dub him "White ISIS" or WISIS.

But when it comes to Trump's devotees, we take a much different tack.

Pundits are hand-wringing trying to explain his continued lead in the Republican nomination polls, and seem to take comfort in the fact that more Republicans don't support Trump than do. Reporters covering his rallies noted this week that Trump seems to beguile his supporters with humour and flattery. Psychologists are positing Trump's fans are swayed mostly by his defiant stance.

But few are blaming Trump's supporters for their culpability in spreading anti-Muslim, anti-Mexican and anti-Chinese vitriol. And even fewer are explaining his popularity by calling a spade a racist.

Conservatives, of course, don't want to alienate their own, especially when they're courting votes.

Liberals have no excuse. Except possibly the fear of backlash, and I'll admit to being worried myself. I like the various explanations offered for Trump's popularity, because they make me feel better about my fellow humans.

If they're not hate-filled, it's easier to keep up my whole humanistic world view, never mind my Catholic one. We're supposed to be accepting of all. We also tend to believe people hold different opinions only because we haven't quite got to them yet.

I might, if I met them in a coffee shop, like a Donald Trump supporter without knowing they were one, and I wouldn't want to piss off my new brew buddy.

But the stakes, in the case of Trump's rally-goers, are far too high for all that.

Anti-Muslim sentiment is rising. And it doesn't need a boost from the most widely covered politician in the U.S., if not the world.

So let's be honest: Anti-Muslim sentiment is only getting that boost because Trump's disciples are racist. Not confused. Not afraid. Not manipulated by flattery. Racist.

I think it's very, very sad, yet important, and probably not politically correct, but I don't care, eh Trump? Otherwise, it's going to get worse and worse, folks. We have no choice. So, Donald, how's that for politically incorrect?

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metro LIFE
Your essential daily news

It's that time of year when books critics sort through the piles on their desks in search of the best of the best. While you can't go wrong with any of the titles on this year's Scotiabank Giller Prize shortlist — especially Andre Alexis' Fifteen Dogs, which took the award — plenty of other Canadian 2015 releases are worth picking up as a present, or for that coveted holiday-vacation read **SUE CARTER** FOR METRO

Every gift in the book

The Devil You Know, Elisabeth di Mariaffi (Patrick Crean Editions)
Elisabeth di Mariaffi's first thriller, set in 1993 just prior to the arrest of serial rapist Paul Bernardo, introduces a confident new voice who perfectly capturing the paranoia and fear of the time through the eyes of a young reporter.

The Social History of Ink, Ted Bishop (Viking)
Alberta professor Ted Bishop travels the world to uncover the cultural history of ink. Who knew that the ubiquitous ballpoint pen has such a sordid legacy of murder, rivalries and intrigue?

Kim Echlin, Under the Visible Life (Hamish Hamilton)
The power of music and the isolation of being an outsider makes Kim Echlin's story about a decades-long friendship between two women one of the year's most overlooked novels.

Beyond the Pale: Folklore, Family, and the Mystery of Our Hidden Genes, Emily Urquhart (HarperCollins)
After giving birth to a daughter with albinism, Emily Urquhart uses her background as a folklorist to uncover various stories and fables in hopes of better understanding the cultural narratives surrounding the genetic disorder.

If I Fall, If I Die, Michael Christie (McClelland & Stewart)
Vancouver author and former pro-skateboarder Michael Christie draws on his personal history in this novel about a young boy in Thunder Bay who longs to go outside and leave the safety of his agoraphobic mother.

Sidewalk Flowers, JonArno Lawson and Sydney Smith (Groundwood Books)
Sure, it's technically a kids' picture book, but JonArno Lawson's wordless poem, about a young girl observing the world while her distracted dad carries on their walk, is a poignant reminder for grown-ups to slow down. Warning: Sydney Smith's gorgeous illustrations may draw a few tears.

Stalin's Daughter, Rosemary Sullivan (HarperCollins)
History buffs will love Rosemary Sullivan's meaty biography of Svetlana Alliluyeva, the only daughter of the tyrant dictator Joseph Stalin, who spent her long, fascinating life trying to escape her father's name.

Russell Smith, Confidence (Biblioasis)
It has been nearly 20 years since Russell Smith burst onto the literary scene heralding a new generation of writers more interested in what was happening at the cocktail bar than the CanLit settings of yore. Smith's short stories prove that he is still an astute observer of urban mores.

The Brief Reincarnation of a Girl, Sue Goyette (Gaspereau Books)
Sue Goyette's powerful poetry collection doubles as documentary as she tries to make sense of the true-life story of a couple tried for murder after their young child died from a prescribed drug cocktail meant to treat ADHD and bipolar disorder.

James Grainger, Harmless (McClelland & Stewart)
It's no surprise that Atom Egoyan has already optioned James Grainger's debut novel. This taut, economically written thriller about a friends' weekend away contains some gory twists, and doubles as a clever exploration of contemporary masculinity.

Sue Carter is the editor at Quill & Quire magazine.

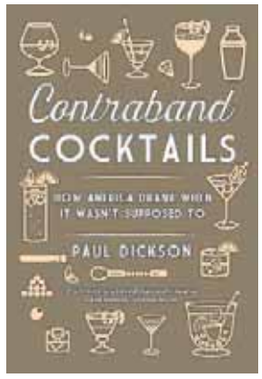
SHOPPERS DRUG MART
SEE WHAT'S NEW... CHECK OUT OUR LATEST OFFER ON PAGE 35

3 PICKS FOR THE BOOK LOVERS ON YOUR LIST

Everyone knows the best gifts are the ones that are thoughtful and a wink to the gift recipient's personality. Forget those generic gift cards and go for one of these fun books. Whether you're looking for something for your office Secret Santa party, for the guy or girl you're kind of into, or for your best friend, you're sure to win some points with one of these picks. **EMILY LAURENCE FOR METRO**

1 Contraband Cocktails by Paul Dickson

Give your favourite drinking buddy a recipe book for cocktails made popular during Prohibition. Just because consuming alcohol was illegal didn't stop people from drinking; there were over 32,000 speakeasies in New York City alone. Author Paul Dickson serves up some fascinating history and photographs of the Prohibition Era, and lots of recipes to keep you warm through the winter.

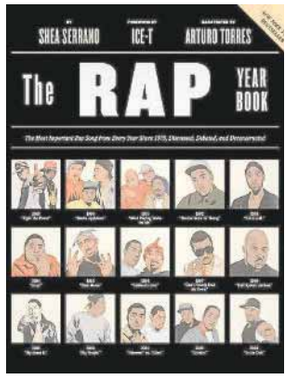


2 Picador Modern Classics

These pocket-sized titles are stunning, and even though they're tiny, the font isn't ridiculously small or hard to read. Books as good as Jeffrey Eugenides' The Virgin Suicides and Housekeeping by Marilynne Robinson.

3 The Rap Year Book by Shea Serrano

This new book highlights the pivotal moments in rap from the past 36 years. Biggie, Tupac, Sugarhill Gang, Drake — they're all in here. And with an intro by Ice-T, colorful pages packed with quizzes, lyric maps, artist portraits and infographics, it's way cooler than any history book you've ever seen.



BOOK BRIEFS

Nonfiction prize long list announced

Twelve titles have made the long list for the 2016 RBC Taylor Prize for nonfiction, including one by a former winner and another that's already won a major award.

Toronto journalist Ian Brown, who won the $25,000 Taylor prize in 2010 for his memoir The Boy in the Moon: A Father's Search for His Disabled Son, made the cut this time for Sixty: The Beginning of the End, or the End of the Beginning? (Random House Canada). Also on the list is Stalin's Daughter: The Extraordinary and Tumultuous Life of Svetlana Alliluyeva (HarperCollins Publishers) by Toronto's Rosemary Sullivan, which won the $60,000 Hilary Weston Writers' Trust Prize for Nonfiction in October.

Another title on the list is Road Trip Rwanda: A Journey Into the New Heart of Africa (Viking Canada) by Calgary's Will Ferguson, who won the 2012 Scotiabank Giller Prize for his novel 419.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Ripley's tales hang by a head, or hair

BELIEVE IT OR NOT!

Curiosity drives popular oddities series, archivist says

Dean Lisk
Metro | Canada

At what point does a person realize they can dislocate their eyeball from its socket, or swallow a sword, or contort their body so it fits into a suitcase, or even lift a washing machine with only their hair?

"I think sword swallowing is lame. That is where I draw the line. But, how you learn you can swallow a sword is one of the greatest mysteries of my life," says Edward Meyer, vice president of exhibits and archives at Ripley's Entertainment Inc.

He had a chance to learn the answer a number of years ago when he met the man who holds a record for the most swords swallowed at once, the longest sword swallowed and who can even bend over and bow while performing the trick.

"I asked him, I'd wanted to ask a sword swallower this for 20 years, how did you learn to do this? And, I kid you not, he was a juggler and he found out the sword swallower in the show was earning twice his salary. He decided he was going to learn to do it. He walked into an army surplus store, took a sword off the wall and shoved it down his throat.

"He hurt himself, but realized what the trick was right away, and said, 'Hey I can do this.'"

Sword swallowing is one of the believable — even though you may be taken aback by it — facts included in Ripley's Believe It Or Not! Eye-Popping Oddities, the 12th and newest in a series that examines some of the odd, unusual and unbelievable.

"It's human curiosity, in a nutshell" Meyer says of Ripley's appeal. As the archivist, he takes care of the more than 35,000 exhibits in the entertainment chain's 32 "odditoriums" around the world, more than 50,000 photographs, and the 120,000 cartoons from its 98-years (and counting) of newspaper-syndicated columns.

"People want to know about the rest of the world and their place in it. And, if they are odd or eccentric, they want to think they have a big place in it, and that 15 minutes of fame that Andy (Warhol) promised everybody is a big motivator."

Many of the things you will find in the book, including a young woman who can lift a washing machine by her hair while hanging upside down, are submitted by the public. It's a tradition which began with Robert Ripley, who created his first Believe It or Not! cartoon for The New York Globe in 1918.

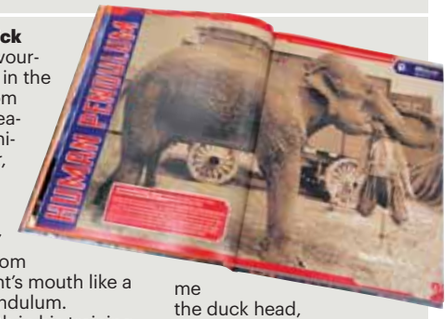
"He realized that people were his greatest source of information," says Meyer. "He said give me your stuff and I will make you famous, that is what it boils down to."

It made the U.S. postal service boil over in frustration. Instead of addressing their letters directly to Ripley, many were mailed using funny addresses or labelled with drawings. It prompted the service to issue a stern warning.

"It became a game to see how you could get to Ripley without directly going the easy route," Meyer says. "People were really clever. At the time he was getting over 2 million pieces a year on average, so half of that, a quarter of that, had weird addresses the post guy had to figure out or decipher — you could tell why they were upset."

Eye-Popping Oddities is the 12th book in the Ripley's Believe it Or Not! series. LIZ BEDDALL/METRO

TOO WEIRD EVEN FOR RIPLEY'S



Editor's pick
Meyer's favourite picture in the book is from 1931 and features an animal trainer, who goes by the nickname "Cheerful," hanging from an elephant's mouth like a human pendulum.

"The faith in his training skills that this elephant isn't going to crush him, isn't going to sneeze on him or inhale him, or anything else, is mind blowing."

What readers want
While every book Ripley's puts out is different, Meyer says every edition includes a chapter on food.

"I don't get it," he says. "I've probably eaten more weird food than anybody else you will ever meet, but I don't like looking at pictures of weird foods. Give me the duck head, and I will try it, but I don't need to stare at it."

What you won't find
If it's 100 per cent true, Ripley's wants it. But, there are some things they won't touch, says Meyer.

"We shy away from nudity — totally away from pornography. We aren't really keen on aliens or 'witchcraft.' If you can't prove it — that doesn't mean we aren't interested in it — but if you can't prove it, we are not going to put our name on it." DEAN LISK/METRO

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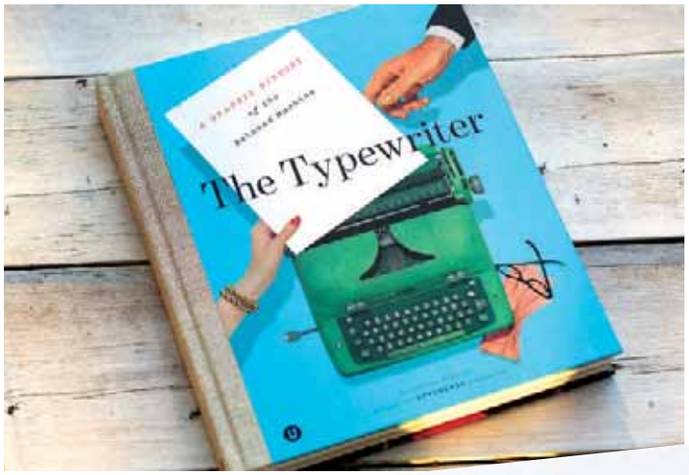

Just my type

The Typewriter: A Graphic History of the Beloved Machine (UPPERCASE publishing) is filled with facts, photos, illustrations and advertisements that illuminate a subject which is occasionally provocative and unexpectedly fascinating. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Typewriting Protocol (pullout book)

The handbook, entitled How to be a super-secretary, offers a range of etiquette tips and ideas for working women that is rife with sexist language and is frequently hilarious. For example, on appropriate dress for the office, ladies should find the balance between "ultra-extreme" and "over casual" and avoid elaborate makeup and hair styles. A two-page quiz encourages secretaries to rate their performance in 13 categories and then to check it again six months later. An extensive list of boss pet peeves includes admonitions against "chewing gum" and "swearing (this should be the boss's privilege)."

Keyboard basics

One of the earliest examples of a typewriter keyboard shows a design that competed with and eventually prevailed over rival designs to become the standard for typewriter and computer keyboards in the modern era. Note that in the interest of economy, the keyboard in the picture does not include a key for the number 1, instead relying on uppercase I or a lowercase l. Other machines at the time omitted the numbers 1 and 0 for the same reason.

Early advertisements

As women began to enter the workforce in ever greater numbers, an array of post cards from the early 20th century demonstrate the issue of office romance in ways ranging from gently humorous to downright lecherous. The underlying message is that men are in charge in the workplace and may or may not take liberties while women may be objects of attraction but are always subordinate.

Origins of the office pool

A lantern slide shows a typical scene in a secretarial pool busily working away in a crowded office space in Vienna circa 1910. Note that the women are all well covered in the conservative dress of the day and wear their hair pinned up. The slide has been hand-painted to add colour to their cheeks. This is the stereotypical example of secretaries with demure smiles and fashionable dress.

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Atwood pens her first graphic novel

ANGEL CATBIRD

'Pulp-inspired' superhero is part owl, cat

Venerable Canadian novelist Margaret Atwood is expanding her repertoire in an unlikely direction as the author of a three-part superhero graphic novel.

Atwood will write the series entitled Angel Catbird for Dark Horse Comics, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary next year.

Atwood contacted the publication — based in Milwaukie, Ore. — on the advice of Hope Nicholson, who recently ran a successful Kickstarter campaign to create The Secret Loves of Geek Girls. Atwood contributed some original comic drawings to that all-female non-fiction anthology.

"Margaret brought her project to Dark Horse and we talked about it and we're very, very excited and quickly got it approved (by) her and started working on it," editor Daniel Chabon said.

Chabon described the project as "a pulp-inspired superhero story," about a scientist whose DNA becomes fused with an owl and cat.

"There'll be an antagonist in the story and a love interest. There'll be something different for everyone and a lot of cat puns, too. It's fantastic," Chabon said.

"This is a great book to add to our line. Of course if it does well, we'd like to do more," Chabon added.

The series will be illustrated by another Canadian, Vancouver-based artist Johnnie Christmas, with the first part set for release in September 2016.

Chabon acknowledged the challenge of working with an author of Atwood's calibre.

"It's funny because (Atwood) has been writing forever so it's a little intimidating sometimes to try to give her notes and stuff like that. It's like, 'how on Earth am I going to give notes to Margaret Atwood?'" Chabon said.

"But she (Atwood) is very receptive to notes. It's been a pleasure so far being able to work with her," he added.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Proposal to amend municipal Zoning By-Laws for Eglinton Crosstown LRT stations

Community Meeting

The City of Toronto invites you to a community meeting and information session on proposed zoning by-law amendments required to permit the proposed transit station buildings, maintenance storage facility and traction power sub-stations along Eglinton Avenue between Jane Street and Kennedy Road.

Time: **7-9 p.m., Monday, December 14, 2015**
Location: **Northern District Library - Room 224**
40 Orchard View Boulevard
(1 block north of Eglinton Ave. just west of Yonge St.)

Proposal:
A proposed amendment to the City of Toronto Zoning By-law No. 569-2013, the former City of Toronto Zoning By-law No. 438-86, the former City of North York Zoning By-law No. 7625, the former City of Scarborough Zoning By-law Nos. 9276, 9089 and 24982, the former Borough of East York Zoning By-law No. 1916 and the former City of York Zoning By-Law No.1-83, respecting regulations applicable to buildings that are used for the operation of a transit system along Eglinton Avenue. Application No. 15257846 WET 12 OZ.

Area:
Eglinton Crosstown LRT Corridor (Eglinton Avenue between Jane Street and Kennedy Road). Stations, Maintenance Storage Facility and Traction Power Sub-stations include:

Allen	Don Mills	Mt Dennis
Avenue	Dufferin	Oakwood
Bathurst	Keele	Traction Power Sub-stations(4)
Bayview	Kennedy	Yonge
Caledonia	Laird	Eglinton Maintenance Storage Facility
Chaplin	Mount Pleasant	

If you would like more information about the meeting contact Natasha Laing at 416-394-8205 or eglinton@toronto.ca

OMB Status Update: Eglinton Connects Official Plan and Zoning By-law Appeals
Some property owners and community groups have appealed certain aspects of the Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-laws approved by City Council in 2014. Two pre-hearing conferences have been held by the OMB to identify parties and define the issues. A further pre-hearing conference will be held in January 2016. The hearing itself will take place in May 2016.

For more information please contact Brian Gallaugher, Manager, City Planning Division at bgallau@toronto.ca

This meeting satisfies Section 5.5.1 of Toronto's Official Plan.

Information will be collected in accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act. With the exception of personal information, all comments will become part of the public record.

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Trumbo leads with three SAG nods

Trumbo landed three Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations. HANDOUT

Straight Outta Compton is up for best ensemble cast. JAIMIE TRUEBLOOD/UNIVERSAL PICTURES VIA AP

Idris Elba is nominated for his role in the Netflix original film Beasts of No Nation. NETFLIX

AWARDS SEASON

Screen Actors Guild Awards highlight 2016 Oscar hopefuls

The Hollywood blacklist drama Trumbo scored a leading three Screen Actors Guild Awards nominations on Wednesday, and sleeper contenders Beasts of No Nation and Straight Outta Compton entered the awards conversation in a real way when both were nominated for best ensemble drama.

Beasts of No Nation star Idris Elba was also nominated for best supporting actor, as well as for his role in TV's Luther. Other best ensemble nominees included Spotlight, which is emerging as the strongest candidate for best picture so far this season; Trumbo; and the housing bubble dramedy The Big Short.

The 22nd annual Screen Actors Guild Awards honouring the best film and television performances of the year will be presented Jan. 30 and broadcast life from Los Angels on TNT and TBS.

Starry ensemble casts left out of the SAG nominations included Ridley Scott's The Martian, Quentin Tarantino's The Hateful Eight and David O. Russell's Joy.

While Straight Outta Compton was a box office and critical hit, its award season prospects were unknown. On Monday, the African-American Film Critics Association named the N.W.A drama their best of the year, but it's been mostly overlooked by other critics' awards.

The nominations helped bring a murky awards season into a bit more focus, and SAG's choices highlighted a few underdog performances.

Leading female performance nominees included Cate Blanchett (Carol), Brie Larson (Room) and Saoirse Ronan (Brooklyn), all of whom have dominated awards buzz, but also Sarah Silverman for the depression indie I Smile Back, and Helen Mirren for Woman in Gold, about an elderly Jewish woman looking to reclaim art once stolen by the Nazis. Mirren was also nominated for a supporting performance for Trumbo.

The lead actor nominees were a bit more expected, with recognition for Bryan Cranston (Trumbo), Johnny Depp (Black Mass), Leonardo DiCaprio (The Revenant), Michael Fassbender (Steve Jobs), and Eddie Redmayne (The Danish Girl).

STACKED DECK
On the TV side, political drama House of Cards leads with three SAG nods including best drama ensemble.

In the supporting category, Christian Bale was nominated for The Big Short, Mark Rylance for the Cold War thriller Bridge of Spies, Michael Shannon for playing a predatory real estate agent in 99 Homes and nine-year-old Vancouver native Jacob Tremblay was acknowledged for playing a child in captivity in Room.

Supporting actress contenders included London, Ont.'s Rachel McAdams (Spotlight), Kate Winslet (Steve Jobs), Alicia Vikander (The Danish Girl) and Rooney Mara (Carol). Mara and Vikander both have significant onscreen time in their respective movies, which has led some awards prognosticators to criticize their supporting actress campaigns.

Nominees are selected by separate movie and TV nominating panels, each comprised of over 2,000 randomly selected SAG members.

Many members of the SAG movie panel also vote for the Academy Awards and as a result, the SAG nominees have traditionally served as a helpful indicator of potential Oscar acting nominees.

In a year when Hollywood's lack of diversity has become of critical concern following last Oscar's all-white acting slate, the individual performance nominees for movies remained largely monochromatic, save for Elba's supporting nominations.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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CANADA'S TOP TEN FILM FESTIVAL

Youth a big theme at fest

The majority of the Canadian movies picked for Canada's Top Ten Film Festival feature a youthful perspective.

Guantanamo's Child: Omar Khadr, by Patrick Reed and the Toronto Star's Michelle Shephard; Patricia Rozema's Into the Forest, starring Ellen Page and Evan Rachel Wood, and Andrew Cividino's Sleeping Giant are among the seven films on the list that focus on young protagonists.

In the case of Alan Zweig's HURT, about Steve Fonyo's tumultuous life in the 30 years since his 1985 cancer fundraising run across Canada at age 19, the documentary forms a disturbing story of a tarnished legacy.

"The future is really bright for Canadian cinema," said TIFF artistic director Cameron Bailey. "For anyone who's looking to see what's going on right now in Canadian movies, I think I would look to young people."

Bailey noted that Sleeping Giant and Closet Monster are both by first-time feature filmmakers.

"We always want a lot more young people to watch Canadian films," Bailey added. "If this helps, then that's great."

The Top 10 features, shorts and student shorts for 2015 were chosen by panels of filmmakers and industry professionals and will screen at TIFF Bell Lightbox from Jan. 8 to 17. Filmmakers and guests provide introductions and do Q&A sessions with filmmakers. A selection of the movies then go on a cross-Canada tour.

"The shorts, I think, are certainly some of the best films we've got on our list this year and certainly some of the best films that have been made in this country this year," said Bailey.

Rounding out the Top 10 feature list is Anne Émond's Les êtres chers (Our Loved Ones), Guy Maddin and Evan Johnson's The Forbidden Room and Philippe Falardeau's My Internship in Canada.

The Lightbox will also host a feature conversation with Kiefer Sutherland on Jan. 16.

For a full list of Top 10 films and screening schedules, go to tiff.net. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

A wave of kidnappings of young boys shocks Montreal in Philippe Lesage's The Demons (Les demons). CONTRIBUTED

JOHANNA SCHNELLER WHAT I'M WATCHING

Peak Meta has arrived on the small screen

THE GRINDER, SEASON ONE, EPISODE THREE (CITY/FOX)

The Sanderson family — put-upon lawyer Stewart (Fred Savage), his wife Debbie (Mary Elizabeth Ellis), his brusque dad Dean Sr. (William Devane), and his heartthrob ex-TV-star brother Dean Jr. (Rob Lowe) are discussing Ray Donovan. (That's Ray Donovan the real TV series, which airs on a rival network, Showtime.)

This entire Grinder episode has revolved around someone erasing Ray Donovan from the family PVR. The words "Ray Donovan" have been uttered six times. Finally, they're watching the show. "Who's that?" Dean Sr. asks. "Ray Donovan!" the others holler.

Welcome to Peak Meta. The Grinder is the name of this show. It's also the name of the show-within-the-show that Dean Jr. starred in (and the name of his character).

It's a prodigal son story: To Stewart's eternal exasperation, people take Dean Jr. seriously as a lawyer simply because he played one on TV. The power and ubiquity of TV are referred to constantly. And of course, all four actors are known from now-iconic series The Wonder Years (Savage), The West Wing (Lowe), It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia (Ellis) and Knot's Landing (Devane).

Not long ago, meta-TV was an erudite concept found only on haute-cable shows. (Who remembers the telefilm The Positively True Adventures of the Alleged Texas Cheerleader-Murdering Mom, which made HBO hip in 1993?) Today it's as dated as the viewers who dived out of the way when they first saw Lumiere's train movie. Now that we barely exist off screen, meta is a sitcom punchline, the TV equivalent of Normcore.

The power of TV is constantly referred to on The Grinder. HANDOUT

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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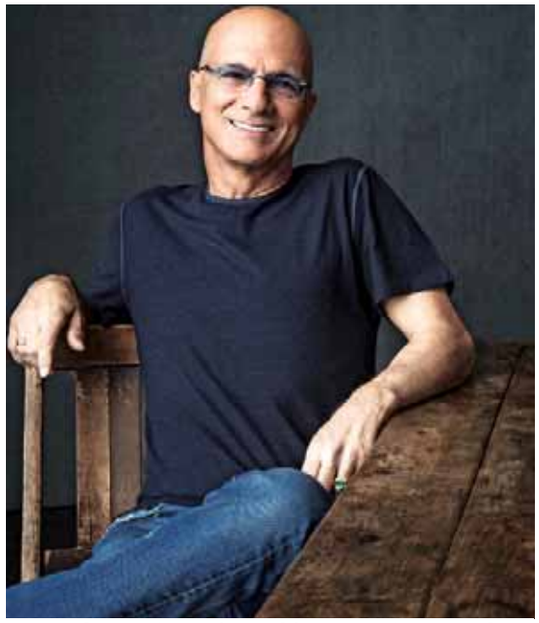
Jimmy Iovine: A year at Apple Music

INTERVIEW

Executive talks DJs, Drake, human-curated content



"Are we there yet? No! Is it a work in progress? Yes!" Apple Music's Jimmy Iovine says of the company. CONTRIBUTED

When Apple Music elbowed their way into the streaming market, they were late to the party: Songza had consciously coupled with Google Play, Spotify's catalogue granted every musical wish (that wasn't Taylor Swift) for free, and Tidal had an 18-artist supertrust of owners, including but not limited to Jay Z, Beyoncé, Kanye West, and Daft Punk.

But like the guest that everyone was waiting for, all eyes turned to Apple Music when it arrived fashionably late last June, shepherded by Jimmy Iovine.

"We've only been open five months," Iovine, 62, says over the phone. "That's a short time. When you're at Apple it's not a short time because all eyes are on you from the minute you think about hatching."

As Apple drops its Best Of list, Iovine looks back on Apple Music's first year.

March: Get Lowe

Iovine made it an early priority to poach beloved BBC DJ Zane Lowe. "We went out and got who we felt was the best guy in the world for discovering new artists," says Iovine. Lowe's show on Beats 1 radio has had such exclusives as an hour-long interview with Adele and first cracks at tracks by artists such as Coldplay and Skrillex.

June: What A Time To Be Alive

When Apple Music launched, they only needed two superstars: Torontonians Drake and The Weeknd, who performed I Can't Feel My Face for the first time at the launch. Drake has since peppered the service with exclusives, such as his dad jivin' Hotline Bling video and his team's OVOSOUND Radio show. "He's a very progressive artist as far as technology is concerned," Iovine says.

July: Press Playlist

A crusader for human-curated content, Iovine personally listened to thousands of playlists, from Trap Soul to Cleaning Up After The Kids, that had been developed by hundreds of Apple employees. He has a tip for aspiring New Year's Eve playlist makers. "The whole thing about playlists is what song comes next," he says.

November: You Had A Bad Day

On November 19, Iovine clumsily tried to underline Apple Music's usability on CBS This Morning by saying, "I've always known that women find it very difficult at times, some women, to find music." The backlash online was immediate.

December: Beats 2.0?

For all the service's success, Iovine is not done yet. "Like anything you're creating, I'm thrilled with some stuff, not so thrilled with other stuff," he says. "I like where we are with our audience reach, I like where we are with our subscriber base so far, I like where we are musically."

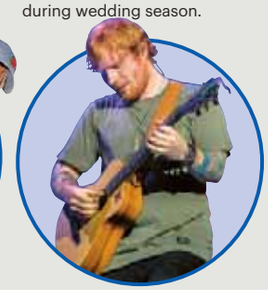
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Top 3 Songs on iTunes in 2015

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

1 Uptown Funk, Mark Ronson (feat. Bruno Mars)
This throwback jam was the biggest hit of 2015.

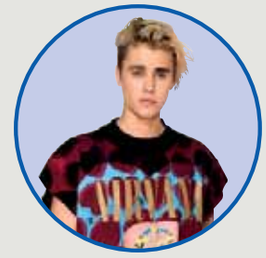
2 See You Again, Wiz Khalifa (feat. Charlie Puth)
The hip-hop tribute scored the touching climax to Furious 7.

3 Thinking Out Loud, Ed Sheeran
Sheeran's guitar ballad bloomed during wedding season.

Top Albums on iTunes in the last year

1 25, Adele
The British ballad belter's record beat every other album released in 2015.

2 If You're Reading This It's Too Late, Drake
What release strategy? Drake's mix tapes didn't need marketing.

3 Purpose (Deluxe), Justin Bieber
Bieber joins the Canadian invasion of the albums' chart.



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GOSSIP BRIEFS

Dad on the dating market

One Direction member Louis Tomlinson tried — and apparently failed — to make things work with girlfriend Briana Jungwirth, but he's since broken up with her, according to Life & Style. Oh, and Jungwirth is due to give birth to his kid next month.

"He dumped her," a source says, adding that the pregnant makeup artist didn't see it coming. "They had been trying to work things out the past few weeks during his One Direction tour. He even introduced Briana to his mom."

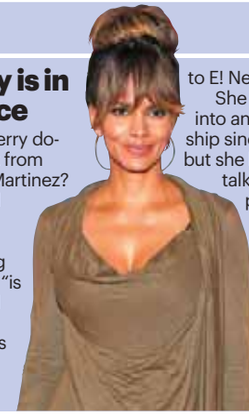
Maybe that didn't go so well? Anyway, lest he be labeled a complete wanker, Tomlinson has "promised to love and support their child financially." NED EHRBAR/METRO

Justin Bieber's Instagram crush

Justin Bieber shared an image of a mystery girl on his Instagram with the caption "Who is this!!" — which was quickly answered by his fans who, much like the flying monkeys of the Wicked Witch of the West, set out to fetch the account info of the girl for Bieber. Turns out she's a 17-year-old from Spain named Cindy Kimberly, according to BuzzFeed.

"I so do not know how to deal with this," Kimberly wrote in an Instagram post. Bieber, likely scared off by the fact that his Instagram crush is only 17, carried on with his life (posting pictures of his Playboy bunny-themed pants, and a car). MATTHEW LEE/METRO

Halle Berry is in a good place



So how is Halle Berry doing since her split from husband Olivier Martinez? Funny you should ask.

Less than two months after filing for divorce, Berry "is in a very peaceful and happy place at this time" and is dating "here and there," according to E! News.

She hasn't gotten into another relationship since her breakup but she has been talking to a few people very lightly and going out when she has time. She enjoys being single and doing her own thing." NED EHRBAR/METRO

MUSIC

Only copy of Wu Tang album goes unplayed

> **I could be convinced to listen to it earlier if Taylor Swift wants to hear it or something like that.**
> Martin Shkreli

Obviously there was no chance any of us were going to be the eventual owner of Once Upon a Time in Shaolin, Wu Tang Clan's new album for which they only made one physical copy, but I didn't expect this.

The new owner is none other than Martin Shkreli, the pharmaceutical CEO who rose to infamy earlier this year for jacking up the price of an AIDS medication to $750 a pill.

And what's even worse? He apparently hasn't even listened to it yet, as he's saving it for when he needs a pick-me-up.

"I could be convinced to listen to it earlier if Taylor Swift wants to hear it or something like that," Shkreli says, according to Bloomberg. "But for now, I think I'm going to kind of save it for a rainy day."

You monster. NED EHRBAR/METRO

Trudeau: Political pinup romances Vogue readers

PUBLISHING

Sure the pics are sexy, but they could be even steamier

Ned Ehrbar
Metro | Hollywood

Justin Trudeau Is the New Young Face of Canadian Politics

VOGUE.COM

Trudeau's wife, Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau (in an Oscar de la Renta dress), says of their first date, "At the end of dinner he said, 'I'm 31 years old, and I've bee...'

PHOTO CREDITS: SCREENSHOTS FROM VOGUE.COM/FACEBOOK/PINTEREST

So Vogue has gone and included newly minted Prime Minister Justin Trudeau in its January 2016 issue, along with a striking portrait photo by Norman Jean Roy that dolls him up like an old Hollywood star. A sexy embrace with his wife, Sophie Grégoire-Trudeau, is also captured by Roy. In Canada, the photos and articles were widely shared on social media (pictured).

Now, discussions of Trudeau's looks are nothing new, but this feels like a whole new level. But did we miss a major opportunity? Imagine, for a moment, that Vogue had gone with their usual shooter for all things easy on the eyes, Annie Liebowitz.

We could've maybe had something like her infamous photo shoot with Miley Cyrus for Vanity Fair.

And now that the image of Justin Trudeau coquettishly wrapped in just a bed sheet is planted firmly in your head, I'll leave you to enjoy the rest of your day.

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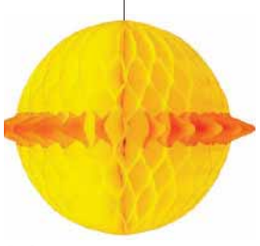
metro HOME

Your essential daily news

For the ultimate Star Wars fan: Millennium Falcon bed from Pottery Barn Kids

STARRY NIGHT CHRISTMAS ORNAMENTS FROM OUTER SPACE



A planet or two
Banish from your mind those ugly reproductions of the solar system in science class. This paper planet will give your Christmas tree an air of elegance. (15 pounds/$31 CDN from the Conran Shop)

A beaded astronaut
Who said that space explorers lacked style? Not the Conran Shop, which has dressed its astronaut in beads. (10 pounds/$21 CDN)

A Star Wars tree
Star Wars is everywhere, in store windows, on TV, and even on your Christmas tree. You'll have to choose between the light side of the Force with this handsome Yoda in resin from Walmart, or the dark side with the shadowy Darth Vader. ($7.47 US/$10 CDN each)

Some festive robots
We can't have a space theme without a robot. These cute ones are multi-coloured and sparkly. ($21.50 US/$29 CDN for a set of three from Paper Chase)

A starry sky
And lastly let's not forget the star, which decorates our tree, but is also a celestial body floating in space. ($3 US/$4 CDN from Paper Chase)

AFP

Avani's second phase has much to attract families

Project overview

Avani 2 is the second of two towers of Avani and the seventh development at the Metrogate community. The suites come in an array of bright open-concept layouts, many with dens and media lofts. Tridel has just released the Diamond Collection from floors 30 to the penthouse.

Building amenities

Club Avani offers a range of indoor and outdoor amenities including a party lounge, formal dining room, a billiards table and theatre. There's a fitness centre with yoga studio, a daycare centre, guest suites and concierge.

Location and transit

Metrogate is serviced by the Kennedy Road TTC bus route, which gets you to Kennedy Station, the subway and LRT. Nearby is the Agincourt GO rail station and drivers will have quick access to Highway 401.

In the neighbourhood

Great shopping at the adjacent Kennedy Commons shopping centre, and a selection of restaurants like Sagano and Cafe Mirage. There are several schools, community centres and services in the area, and the nearby Glamorgan Park.

NEED TO KNOW

What: Avani 2 at Metrogate
Builder: Tridel
Architect: Graziani + Corazza Architects
Interiors: GCB Interior Design
Location: 275 Village Green Sq.
Building: A 35-storey tower with 363 suites
Sizes: From 549 to 827 sq. ft.
Pricing: Starting at the low $200,000s
Suites: One bedroom, one bedroom plus den, two bedroom, two bedroom plus den
Status: Now selling, pre-construction
Occupancy: Fall of 2018
Sales centre: 52 Village Green Sq.
Hours: Monday to Thursday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Saturday and Sunday 12 to 6 p.m.
Phone: 416-293-5535
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Email: metrogate@tridel.com

AVANI 2 AT METROGATE

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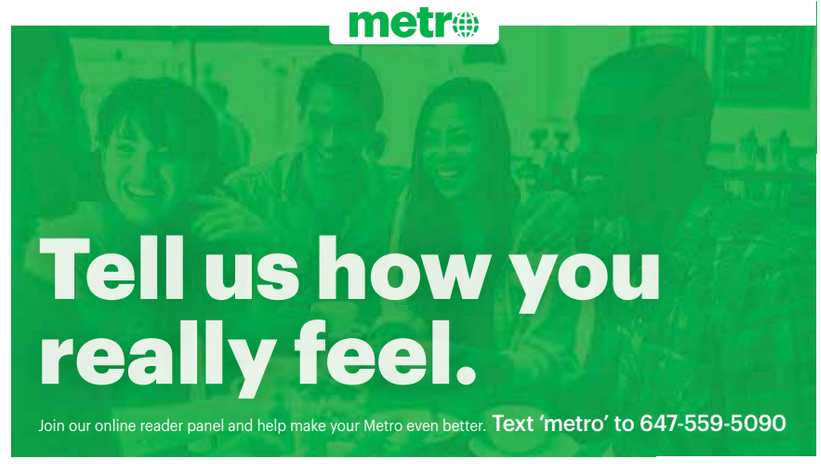

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metro SPORTS

The Habs placed winger Alexander Semin on unconditional waivers Wednesday for the purposes of mutually terminating his contract

Jump-start jolts Raps

NBA

Dinos ride strong 1st Q to beat league's 2nd-best team

WEDNESDAY At ACC

97	94
RAPTORS	SPURS

The Toronto Raptors finally got the strong start they've been looking for — and it paid off in a victory over one of the NBA's top teams.

DeMar DeRozan poured in 28 points to lead the Raptors to a 97-94 victory over the San Antonio Spurs on Wednesday.

Kyle Lowry had 19 points and eight assists, Luis Scola had 16 points and eight rebounds, while Bismack Biyombo had 10 points and seven boards. Patrick Patterson also chipped in with 10 points for Toronto (14-9).

UP NEXT
The Raptors host the Milwaukee Bucks on Friday, then wrap up this six-game homestand Sunday against the Philadelphia 76ers.

Manu Ginobili led the Spurs (18-5) with 17 points, while LaMarcus Aldridge had 13, and David West finished with 10.

The Raptors have been frustratingly slow and sloppy out of the gate. Coach Dwane Casey had even talked about switching up the starting lineup.

They finally showed what a decent first quarter can do, sprinting out to an 11-point lead, and continued to hold their own, taking a 73-62 lead into the fourth quarter in front of a capacity Air Canada Centre crowd of 19,800.

The Spurs, second in the NBA to only the undefeated Golden State Warriors, came to life in the fourth, and when Danny Green drained a three-pointer that circled the rim before dropping, it put San Antonio within three points with 2:47 to play.

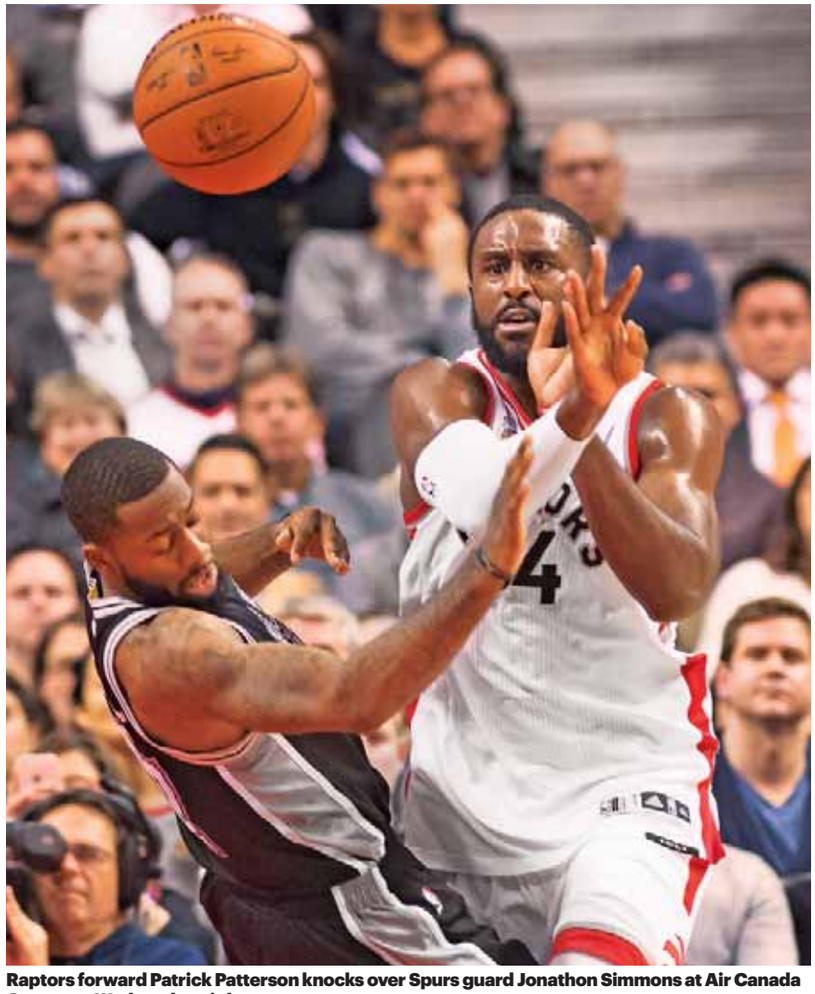
A floating jumper by DeRozan — with two Spurs draped on him — had Toronto up by five with under a minute to play. A Green bucket made it a three-point game with 29 seconds left, then DeRozan grabbed a huge rebound with eight seconds left to secure the victory.

The night marked Cory Joseph's first meeting against his former team since he signed with the Raptors last summer. The Toronto native played four years with the Spurs, including their 2014 NBA championship campaign.

"No bad feelings at all, loved my time there but obviously on to the next stage of my career, I'm very happy right now and just looking forward to the game tonight," Joseph said after the morning shootaround.

Joseph is averaging career highs with his new team — 9.8 points, 2.9 assists and 2.6 rebounds in 26.3 minutes a game — and is solid on the defensive end every night.

THE CANADIAN PRESS



Raptors forward Patrick Patterson knocks over Spurs guard Jonathon Simmons at Air Canada Centre on Wednesday night. NATHAN DENETTE/THE CANADIAN PRESS

CFL

Foley to keep sailing with the Boatmen

The Toronto Argonauts locked up defensive end Ricky Foley to a long-term contract Wednesday by signing the Canadian through the 2018 season.

Foley, who was re-acquired by Toronto last January in a trade with Saskatchewan, had 48 tackles, six sacks and one forced fumble over 16 regular-season games.

Foley, who grew up in Courtice, Ont., is a three-time Grey Cup champion. He won titles with the B.C. Lions in 2006, the Argonauts in 2012 and the Roughriders in 2013.

Also Wednesday, the Argonauts signed Canadian defensive back Marcus Grandison.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Lions, Eskimos, Ticats boast 5 all-stars each

The B.C. Lions, Edmonton Eskimos and Hamilton Tiger-Cats led all teams Wednesday with five selections apiece to the CFL all-star team roster.

Among the selections were Eskimos receivers Adarius Bowman and Derel Walker, Lions linebacker Adam Bighill and running back Andrew Harris, and Ticats linebacker Simoni Lawrence and kick returner Brandon Banks.

Ottawa's Henry Burris, the league's most outstanding player was also selected.

Toronto did not have a league all-star this season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

SATURDAY

THE END OF AN ERA?

Sports autograph collecting may be a thing of the past as handwriting fades away and selfies take their place. See if you can decipher famous sports autographs and discover more this weekend in Toronto Star Touch, the free news app from Toronto Star.

TORONTO STAR TOUCH

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IN BRIEF

Sinclair's double pushes Canada past Mexico

Christine Sinclair scored two goals and Nichelle Prince added a single as the Canadian women's soccer team defeated Mexico 3-0 on Wednesday in Brazil, at the International Tournament of Natal.

All three goals came in the first half. Sinclair opened the scoring in the 15th minute and added another goal six minutes later. Prince made it a three-goal game when she scored in the 44th minute. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Mariners trade for Lind

The busy Seattle Mariners have acquired first baseman Adam Lind from the Milwaukee Brewers for three teenage minor-league pitchers.

The Brewers are getting right-handers Daniel Missaki, Carlos Herrera and Freddy Peralta in the trade announced Wednesday. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ex-Jay Lawrie on move

The Oakland Athletics announced Wednesday they have traded third baseman Brett Lawrie of Langley, B.C., to the Chicago White Sox for right-hander J.B. Wendelken and minor league left-hander Zack Erwin.

The A's acquired Lawrie last off-season as part of the trade that sent reigning AL MVP Josh Donaldson to the Toronto Blue Jays. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Toronto's Spartan ready for middleweight battle

UFC

Undefeated Theodorou to compete on Fight Night

Elias (The Spartan) Theodorou has passed every MMA test thrown at him so far.

The Toronto middleweight has won all 11 of his fights, including both UFC bouts since emerging victorious in The Ultimate Fighter Nations reality TV show. Charismatic and colourful, the 27-year-old is the kind of fighter the UFC hopes can help carry the flag north of the border.

Theodorou's credentials will be put under the microscope again Thursday when he faces Thiago Santos (11-3-0) on a Fight Night card.

The show is the first of three in as many nights in Las Vegas, culminating Saturday in UFC 194 when featherweight titleholder Jose Aldo meets interim champion Conor McGregor.

Thursday's main event features Rose (Thug) Namajunas (4-2-0), ranked third among female strawweights, against No. 7 Paige (12-Gauge) VanZant (6-1-0).

Santos, a former Brazilian army paratrooper, needed just 29 seconds in June to knock former Quebec minor-league hockey enforcer Steve Bosse senseless with a kick to the head. In January, Santos stopped Andy Enz in one minute 56 seconds, hurting him with a body kick before unleashing a barrage of punches.

Theodorou calls Santos the best striker "by far" he has faced — "and someone who can pull the trigger."

"A very tough opponent, who wants to take my block off," he said. But he believes the Brazilian is more vulnerable the deeper he goes into a fight. Santos' lone loss in the UFC since appearing in The Ultimate Fighter Brazil was a unanimous decision to highly touted Uriah Hall.

"I'm going to take him further and further into those deep waters and put on a pace he can't handle," said Theodorou, who has the grinding style and cardio to back that up.

Theodorou prepared for Santos by training in Long Island, N.Y., with middleweight champion Chris Weidman, who defends his title in Saturday's UFC 194 co-main event against Luke Rockhold.

The Toronto fighter had nothing but praise for Weidman and his training team, which includes noted striking coach Ray Longo and former UFC welterweight champion Matt Serra.

"He's the best in the world," Theodorou said of Weidman (13-0-0). "Most other places would want to shelter him, kind of keep him away from anyone. Whereas they're just wide open." THE CANADIAN PRESS

Toronto middleweight Elias Theodorou has won all 11 of his fights, including both UFC bouts since emerging victorious in The Ultimate Fighter Nations show. JACQUES BOISSINOT/THE CANADIAN PRESS

> **"I want to put every single ounce of me when I'm fighting towards that goal of winning. I don't want to be sidetracked.**
>
> Elias (The Spartan) Theodorou

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Arsenal advances on Giroud hat trick

Olivier Giroud scored a hat trick as Arsenal advanced to the last 16 of the Champions League with a 3-0 win over Olympiakos on Wednesday, overturning an advantage held by the Greeks.

The France striker opened the scoring in the 29th minute, heading home off a cross from Aaron Ramsey, with the ball bouncing under goalkeeper Roberto Gonzalez.

He struck again four minutes after halftime, running through defenders to slot in a pass from former Olympiakos player Joel Campbell.

Olympiakos, which beat Arsenal 3-2 in London, nearly pulled a goal back through Kostas Fortounis, while Ideye Brown missed a point blank chance.

But the game followed Arsenal's script and the deafening crowd at Karaiskakis Stadium was silenced when Omar Elabdellaoui slipped and handled the ball.

Giroud again beat Gonzalez from the resulting penalty to seal the match and second place behind Bayern Munich in Group F. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOVING ON

Seeded teams: Real Madrid, Wolfsburg, Atletico Madrid, Manchester City, Barcelona, Bayern Munich, Chelsea, Zenit St. Petersburg.

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RECIPE Baked Fried Chicken

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

All the crunch of fried chicken but with much less fat in the final dish, this baked recipe is sure to become part of your regular roster!

Ready in
Prep time: 60 minutes
Serves 4 to 6

Ingredients
- 1/4 cup buttermilk (or add a tsp of vinegar to regular milk and let it sit for 15 minutes)
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 8 or 9 chicken pieces (thighs and drumsticks)
- 1 1/2 cups whole wheat bread crumbs
- 2 Tbsp fresh thyme
- 1 1/2 tsp lemon zest
- Salt and pepper to taste

Directions
1. Combine the buttermilk and garlic together in a shallow pan container. Coat the chicken pieces thoroughly and cover with plastic wrap. Place in the fridge to marinate for a half an hour or up to over night. Turn the chicken pieces over at least once while marinating.
2. Preheat the oven to 400 F.
3. Mix bread crumbs in a bowl together with the thyme, zest and salt and pepper.
4. Dredge chicken pieces in the bread crumb mixture and place them on a baking sheet. Press bread crumbs onto the meat if some falls off.
5. Bake for 30 to 40 minutes until the outside of the chicken is deeply golden and the meat is cooked through.

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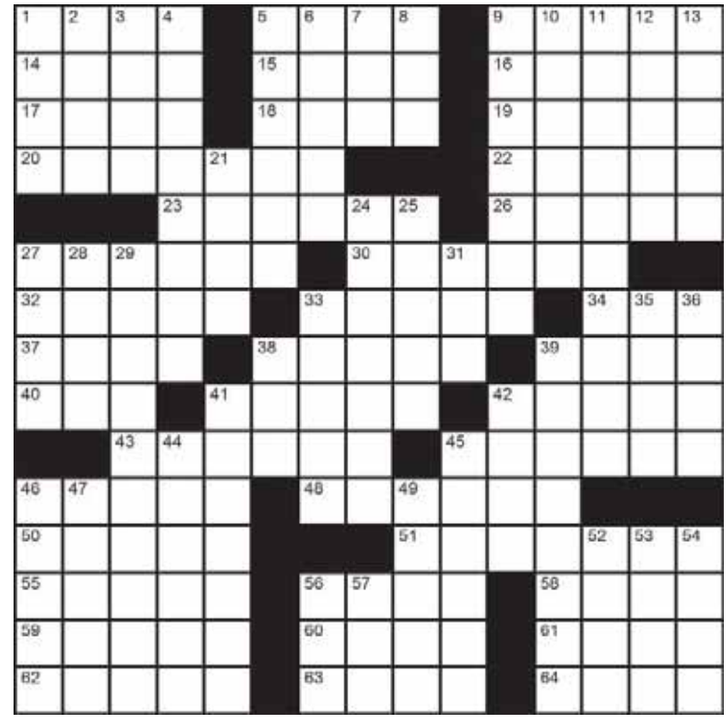
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. Take a genetic sample
5. Rick Danko group, The _
9. Verity
14. Fork prong
15. Comic strip dog
16. Artwork like the original, informally
17. Famous volcano
18. Canadian pop crooner Mr. Forbes (More at #30-Across)
19. Masterpiece-maker's mount
20. Alberta village 45 minutes from Edmonton
22. Geared for rocking
23. Gorges
26. Feats
27. "Angel Eyes" singer Jeff
30. New debut album by #18-Across: '_ Woulda Shoulda'
32. Oscars gr.
33. Awestruck in facial expression
34. Gear
37. Purr alternative
38. Hears, like herald angels
39. Neat
40. "The A-Team" star, _. _
41. Cougars
42. Giver
43. Soldier's uniform part
45. YouTube owner
46. Greek alphabet's 8th letter
48. Short _ (Curt brush-off)
50. Type of mil. mission
51. Away from, say, the manufacturing plant
55. Expect
56. Edge
58. Thought
59. "Wuthering Heights" (1939) star Ms. Oberon
60. Mr. Diggs
61. Tree varieties
62. Crowbar user, say
63. Vesper _, "Casino Royale" (2006) character
64. Seven, in Sherbrooke

DOWN
1. Editor's 'let it stand'
2. "I'm _ You": Avril Lavigne hit
3. 'A' in AD
4. Almond paste is an ingredient in this 'wild' pastry: 2 wds.
5. Furniture retailer with stores across Canada
6. All in _ _ work
7. Puny parasite
8. Private Investigator, e.g.
9. Vintage sewing machine foot peddle
10. Squeezed the orange on the kitchen gadget
11. It's when the talker talks as if everything is a question?
12. Forested
13. Carries
21. "_ Leaving Home" by The Beatles
24. Mark _: Shania Twain duettist on "Party for Two"
25. Drenches
27. Jon of "Mad Men"
28. 'E' of ER, briefly
29. Glass _ jars (Cotton ball holders, perhaps)
31. Parcel delivery co.
33. Willie of "Eight Is Enough"
35. Seacrest's show, split
36. Car wheel, British-spelling style
38. Buzz
39. Canadian footwear brand since the 1940s, Tender _
41. Horticultural holder
42. Politely tip one's hat
44. Star: French
45. Talented
46. The _, Charlie Chaplin's persona
47. Woodcutter
49. _-Noranda, Quebec
52. Laze
53. Office helper, commonly
54. The Middle _
56. Ocean, e.g.
57. James _ (Canadian body of water)

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS by Sally Brompton

Aries March 21 - April 20
Put all doubts and fears out of your mind and do what you think is best. You have a clear picture of what needs to be done and the courage to make it happen. Don't hesitate.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
As communications planet Mercury moves in your favour today you won't be in the least bit shy or tongue-tied. Let others know what it is you need and they will give it.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
If you need to make a new start now is the time to speak up and let others know what it is you intend to do — and that your intentions are serious. But don't get so serious that you forget how to have fun.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
You know that you have what it takes to succeed but others may need some convincing. You'll find it easier to persuade colleagues and employers, just remember that actions count more than words.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
Go your own way and do your own thing. And don't worry about others — the best way to win them over is to act like their approval means nothing to you.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Someone will deliver unexpected news today but you should have seen it coming. No matter how much it might upset you just accept it and move on. What else can you do?

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
There is someone you should be seeing more of and this is the ideal time to ring them up and arrange to get together again. Don't drift apart so easily in future.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You have overlooked a small but important detail and the effects of that oversight will become apparent. Do not blame others for your failure. Be big enough to own your mistakes.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
For too long you've kept your aims and ambitions to yourself — let everyone know what you want and what you're doing to get it. Most people will be supportive. The few who are not you can safely ignore.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
The doubts and fears of the past few weeks will fade away today as Mercury moves into your sign. The things you have been most anxious about will turn out to be the things you had least to fear.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Put principle before profit and don't worry if you seem to be the only one who cares. Others do care but few get as emotionally involved as you.

Pisces Feb. 20 - March 20
Difficult choices concerning your career will have to be made but don't do anything before you have consulted people you trust. It could be they can suggest less painful ways of making the changes you need.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

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2								

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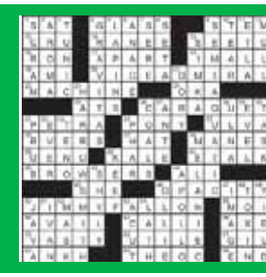

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8	3	2	9	5	1	4	7	6
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